

PLAIN TALKS

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE



74

YEARS OF COVERS



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In the beginning was Plain Talks.

Seventy-one-year-old **Plain Talks** is a rare example of an employee publication which is three years older than the company it represents.

First published in June 1922 as the employee publication for Eastern Texas Electric Co., the employee tabloid, **Just Plain Talks**, became the official company publication for a group of ice, water, gas and transportation entities which became Gulf States Utilities in 1925.

Over the years the tabloid became a magazine. Its pages—black and white and color—reveal the history of a company and its people.

We see chronicled here the growth of a company that kept the lights on in good times and bad for businesses, families and industries throughout much of Southeast Texas and South Louisiana.

We see a company go through the tough financial times of the Great Depression and the reverberations of the economic slowdown brought on by the Arab oil embargo, then come to the brink of bankruptcy as it struggled to add nuclear capability to its fuel mix and rate base.

During more prosperous times we see the company experience unprecedented growth and build new generating stations at breakneck speed to keep up with an ever-increasing demand for electricity.

We follow the careers of Gulf States employees; learn of their marriages, births and deaths; rejoice with them in their successes and accomplishments; share their disappointments and mourn their sorrows. Some of those same babies who grew up within the pages of this magazine followed in the footsteps of their mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles to become today's Gulf States employees.

Now we enter a new era as we approach our merger with Entergy. The GSU news from **Plain Talks**—which began as a tabloid—will become part of the Entergy employee publication **ON!**—which appears in the tabloid format. Suddenly everything old is new again.

Once more we will build on the past as we reach toward the future. But before we move on to that future, let's look back one more time at our Gulf States heritage through the pages of this commemorative issue.

Betty Gavora
Executive Editor 1983-93





'20s

by Mark Viguet
Contributing Writer 1987-93

A turbulent and exciting decade, 1920 - 1929 found post-World War I America maturing as a people and a nation, though that maturation would not come without growing pains.

The 18th amendment to the Constitution began a period of prohibition, along with the bootleggers, speakeasies, flappers, stills, moonshine, gangsters and corrupt politicians that marked the nationwide effort to halt alcohol consumption. Charles Lindbergh became a national hero, flying his plane, The Spirit of St. Louis, on the first trans-Atlantic Ocean air journey, departing from New York and landing in Paris 33-1/2 hours later.

Women earned the right to vote when the 19th amendment to the Constitution gave women the suffrage they had fought to obtain. The downhome wisecracks, commentaries and witticisms of cowboy comedian Will Rogers entertained and endeared the nation. George Washington Carver conducted his famous agricultural experiments that derived an astonishing range of products from various crops, most notably peanuts. William Faulkner published his fourth novel and first acknowledged masterpiece, "The Sound and the Fury."

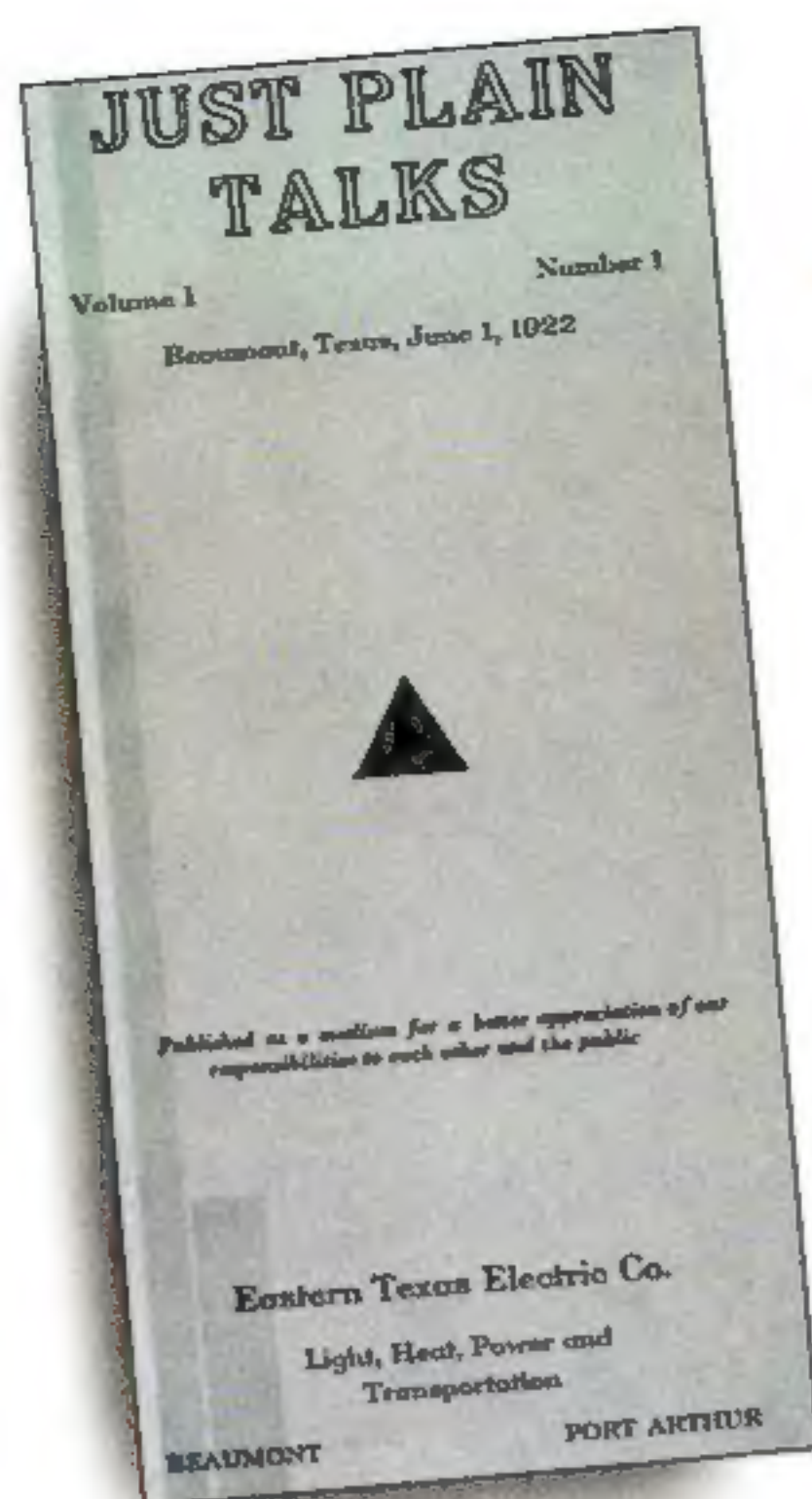
And on Oct. 29, 1929, known as "Black Tuesday," the stock market crashed, eventually wiping out \$30 billion in value of listed stocks on the New York Stock Exchange. The most catastrophic day in the market's history was the forerunner of the great Depression.

Early in the decade, on June 1, 1922, Eastern Texas Electric Co. published the first issue of **Just Plain Talks**, a magazine described as "a medium for a better appreciation of our responsibilities to each other and the public." That simple debut would be the first of 71 years of service to the company, its employees and retirees.

A series of mergers and acquisitions of various ice, water, gas and transportation properties culminated on Aug. 25, 1925, in the incorporation of a single company—Gulf States Utilities—charged with the task of providing electricity, gas, water and ice to the public.

In the 1920s, two major periods of growth helped form the basis of the GSU of today. In 1926, Louisiana Electric Co. and Eastern Texas were brought into Gulf States, and with them such properties as Jennings Utilities and Lake Charles Electric Co. in Louisiana and the ice, water, and light utilities of Beaumont, Port Arthur and Silsbee in Texas. The next major expansion brought in Western Public Service in 1929, which included the area in Texas which now makes up the bulk of GSU's Western Division, including the cities of Conroe, Navasota, Cleveland, Huntsville, Liberty and Dayton.

With its name changed to **Plain Talks** later in the decade, the magazine, like the company, was ready to continue to render "Dependable Public Service" in the years to follow.



June 1922



September 1922
First Cover Art



September 1924



March 1924

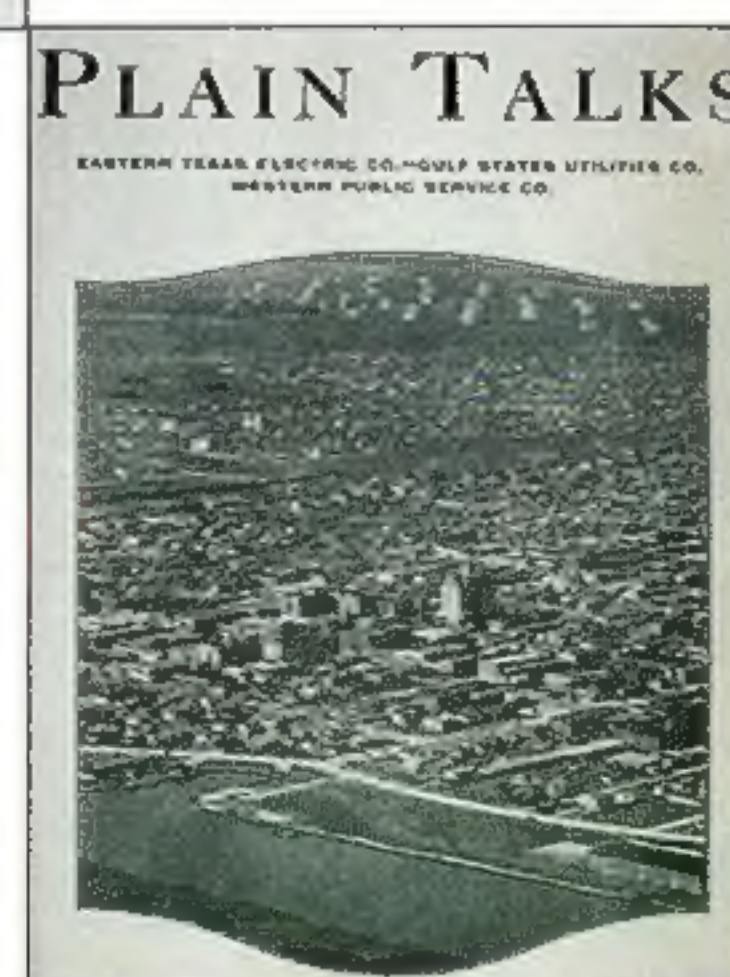


October 1924

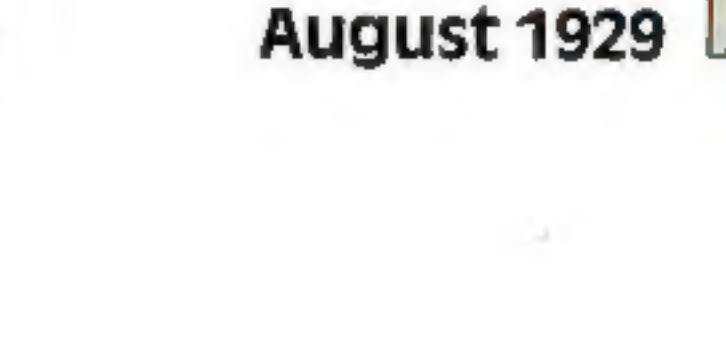
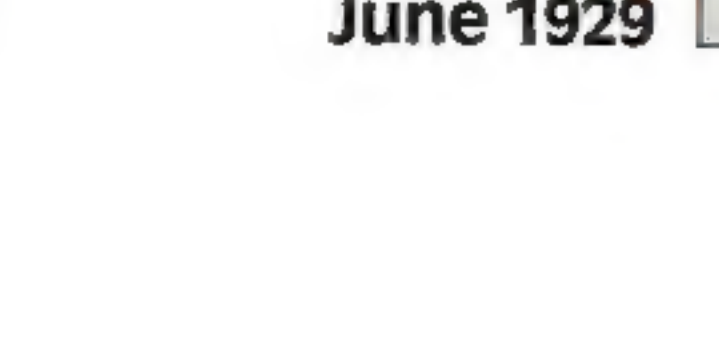
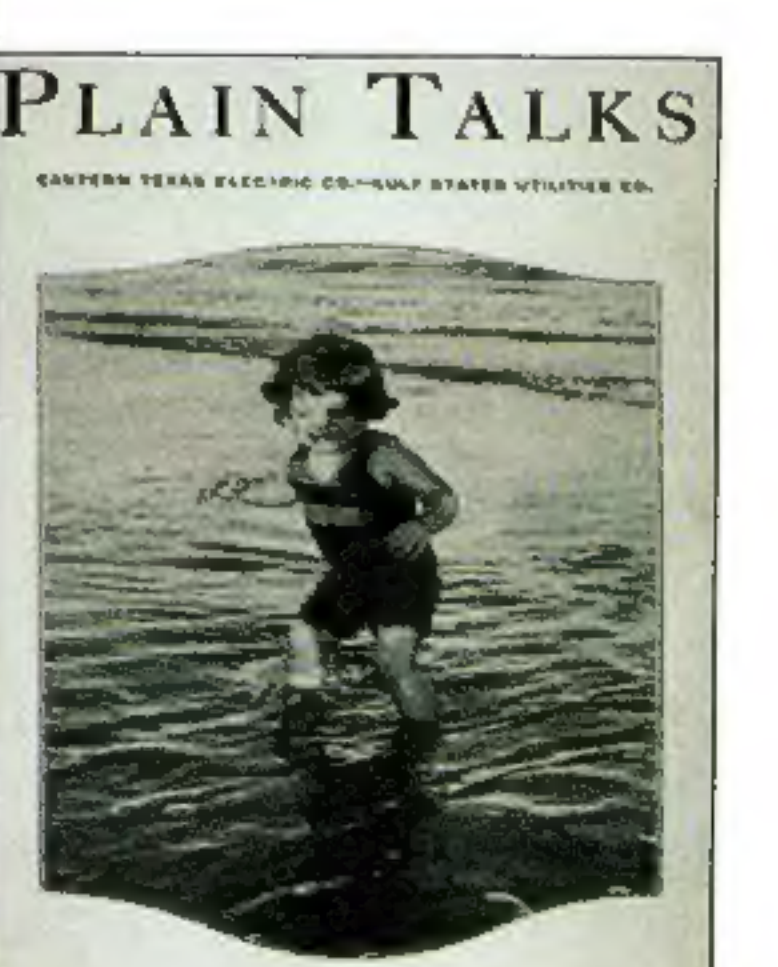
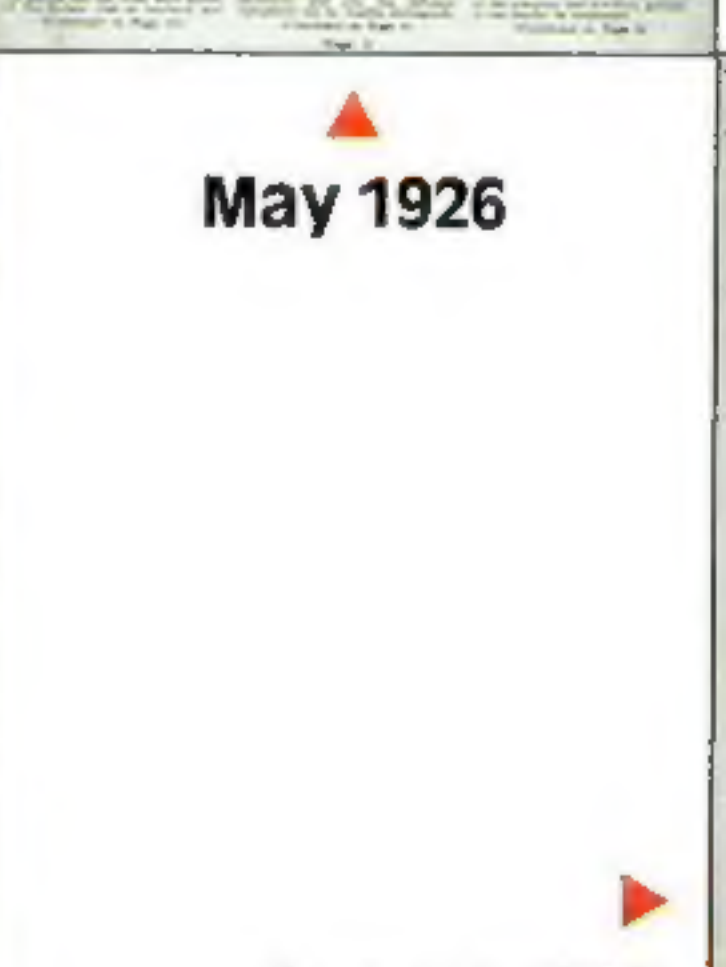
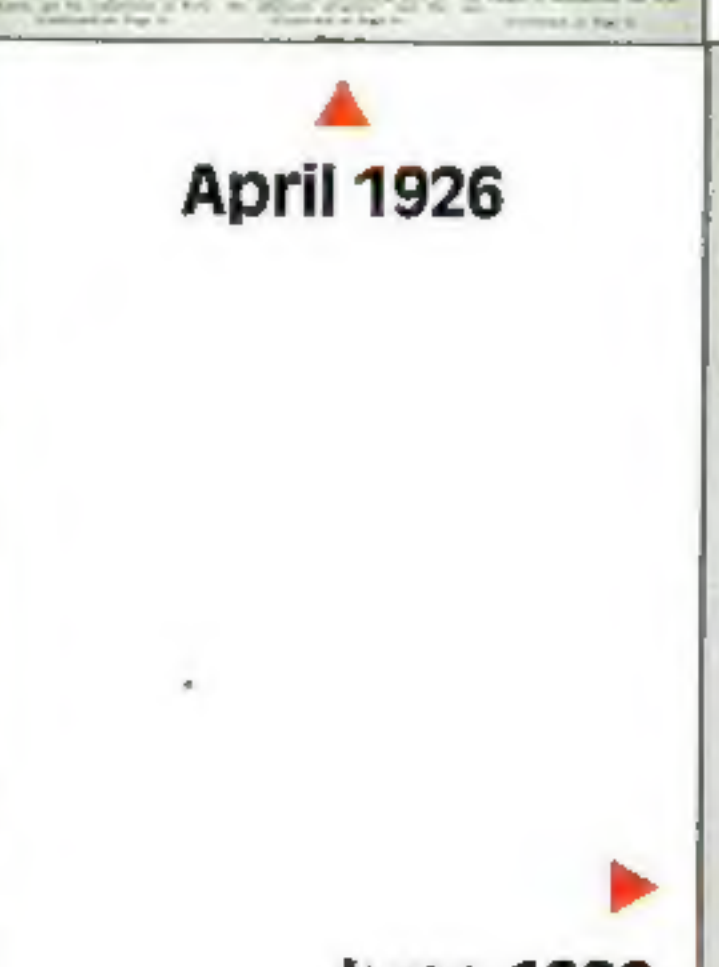
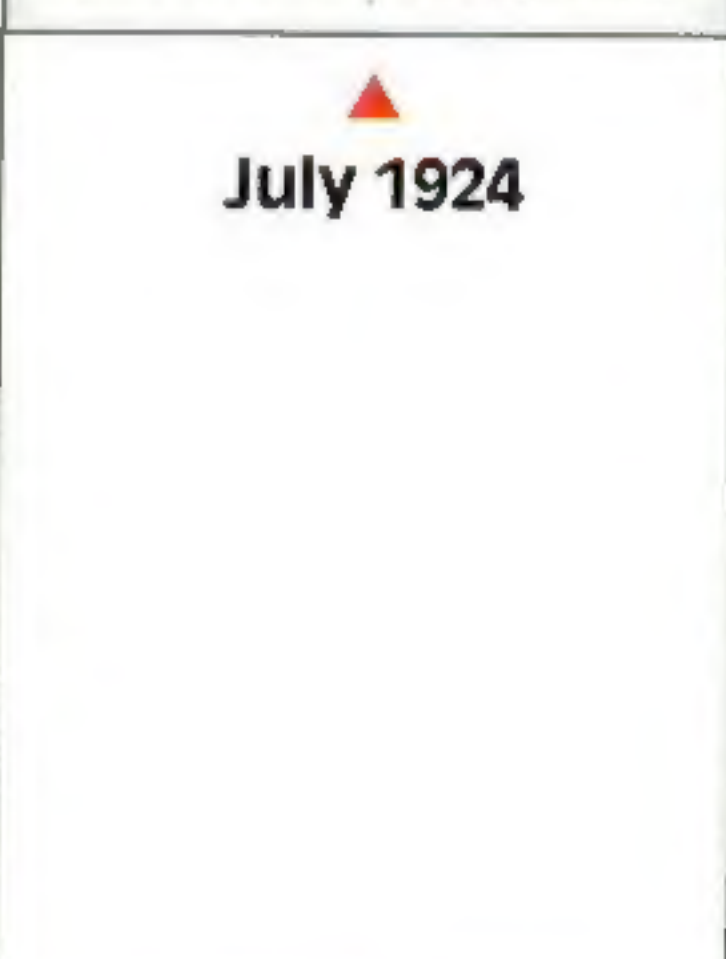
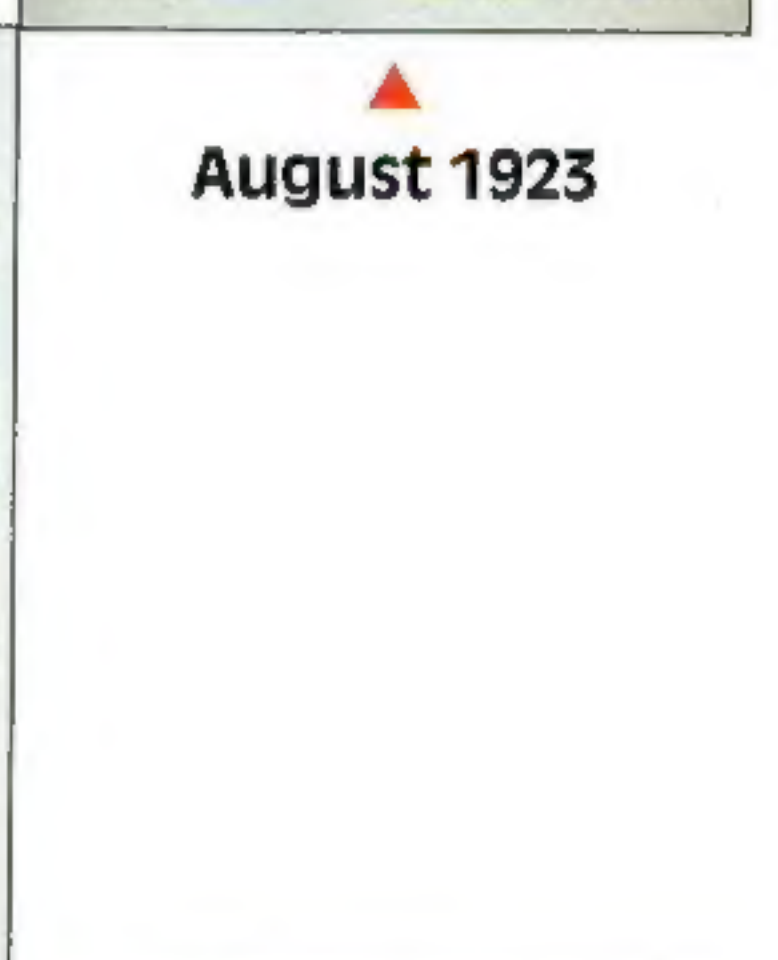
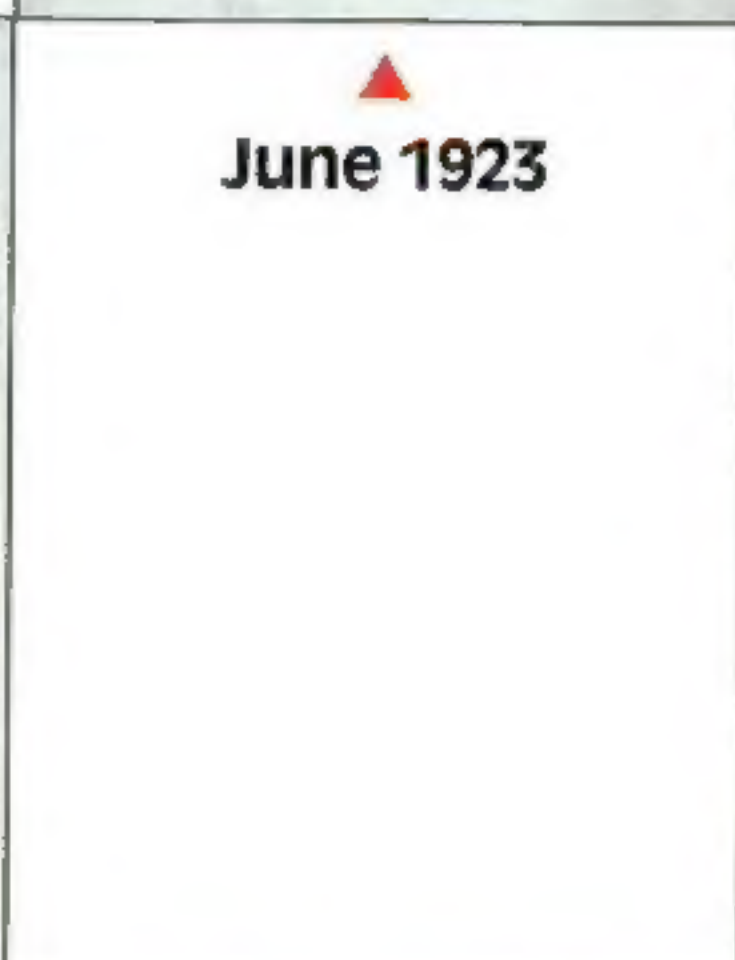


August 1925

March 1929



January 1929



'30s

by Pris Gallagher
Contributing Writer 1990-93

With the nation in the Great Depression, 6-year-old Gulf States Utilities ushered in the new decade with the introduction of night football. Beaumont High School started its 1930 season to a record opening crowd under fifty-two 1,500 watt lamps. That year also saw an 11 percent increase in electric sales and half a million dollars in sales in new electric appliances.

But things soon changed as the Depression began to tighten its grip on the South.

Petroleum, cotton, lumber and rice — the main industries in the GSU service area — slowly fell victim to the economy and impacted electric sales. GSU responded by cutting expenses and reducing salaries, starting with the president on down. Many full-time employees were reduced to part-time status. Employee layoffs were minimized by mandatory "Hoover vacations," two weeks off without pay every six months.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president in 1932. Soon after, he announced his New Deal, creating such programs as the Rural Electrification Administration and the Tennessee Valley Authority. His radio broadcasts, dubbed "Fire Side Chats," did much to allay American fears of the economy.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles away, Adolph Hitler assumed office as Chancellor of Germany, starting in motion the largest war the world has ever seen, with events unparalleled in modern times.

Despite the Depression, GSU employees closely followed national

headlines, such as the dedication of the Empire State Building and the kidnapping of Charles Lindbergh Jr. Amelia Earhart became the first woman to make a solo transatlantic flight, only to disappear over the Pacific Ocean on a round-the-world flight.

Louisiana garnered national headlines when Huey Long, the populist senator, was shot while visiting his state capital in Baton Rouge.

Closer to home, GSU, already suffering from lower revenues, faced a significant impact when area towns, hit with declining incomes, cut back drastically on street lighting, with the city of Beaumont completely eliminating downtown lighting.

Streetcars, once a profitable part of the business, soon fell victim, edged out by taxi cabs offering 10 cent fares.

Plain Talks was on the brink of extinction, going from being published at infrequent intervals to ceasing operation completely in 1935. Publication was resumed the following year.

The last big addition to GSU came on its 13th birthday, Aug. 25, 1938, with the addition of Baton Rouge Electric Co. and Louisiana Steam Generating Corp. Over the next several years, smaller electric companies in the Baton Rouge area were added to form the modern-day GSU.

The 1930s proved to be a time of struggle as well as a time of enormous growth for the company and the country.



February 1930



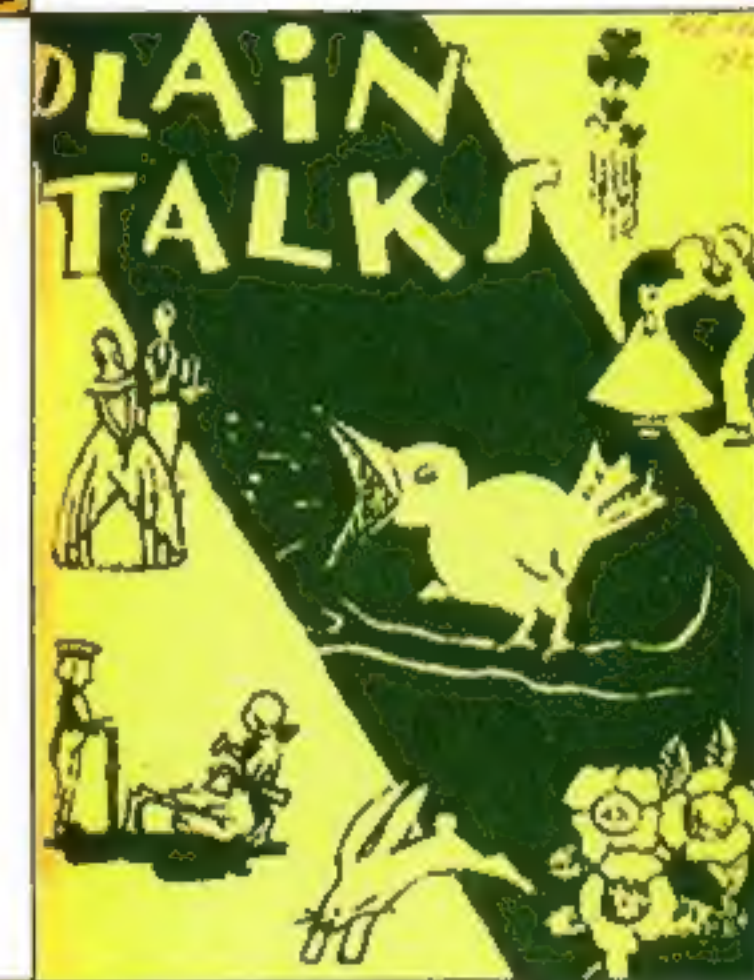
January 1930



June 1930



November 1930



February 1933



November 1933



July 1937



January 1936

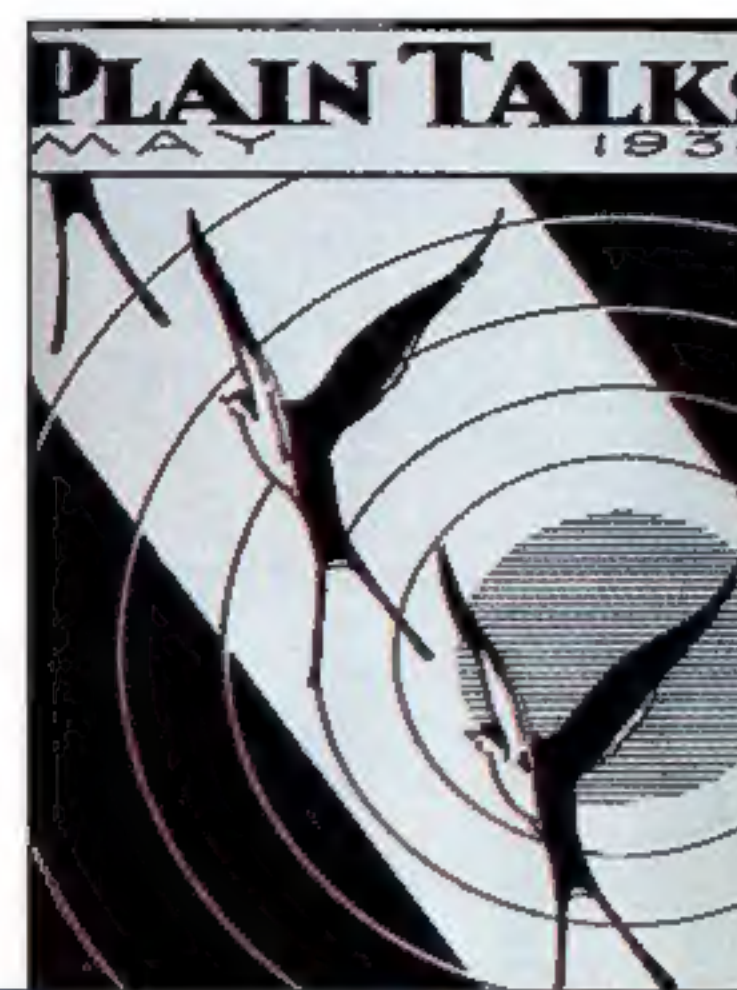
Plain Talks



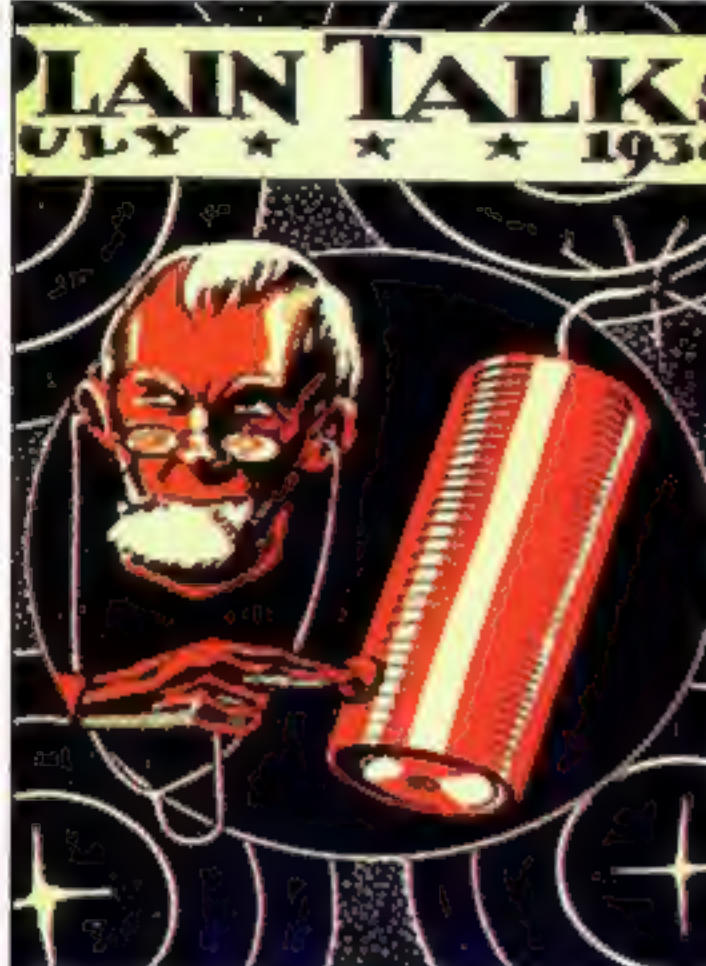
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March 1930



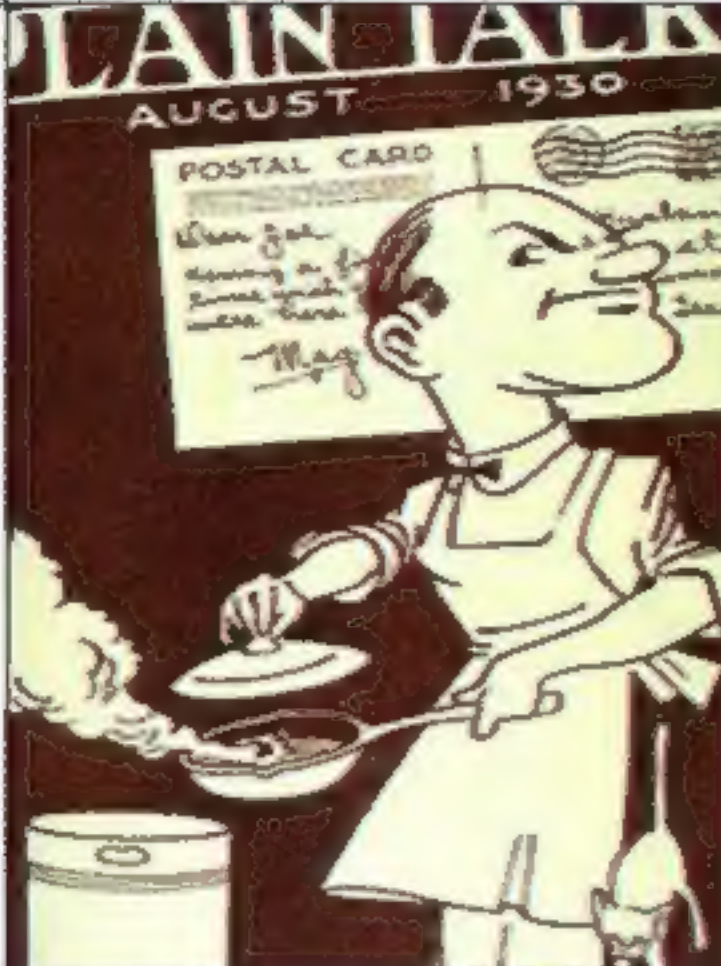
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April 1930



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May 1930



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July 1930



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August 1930



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September 1930



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June 1933



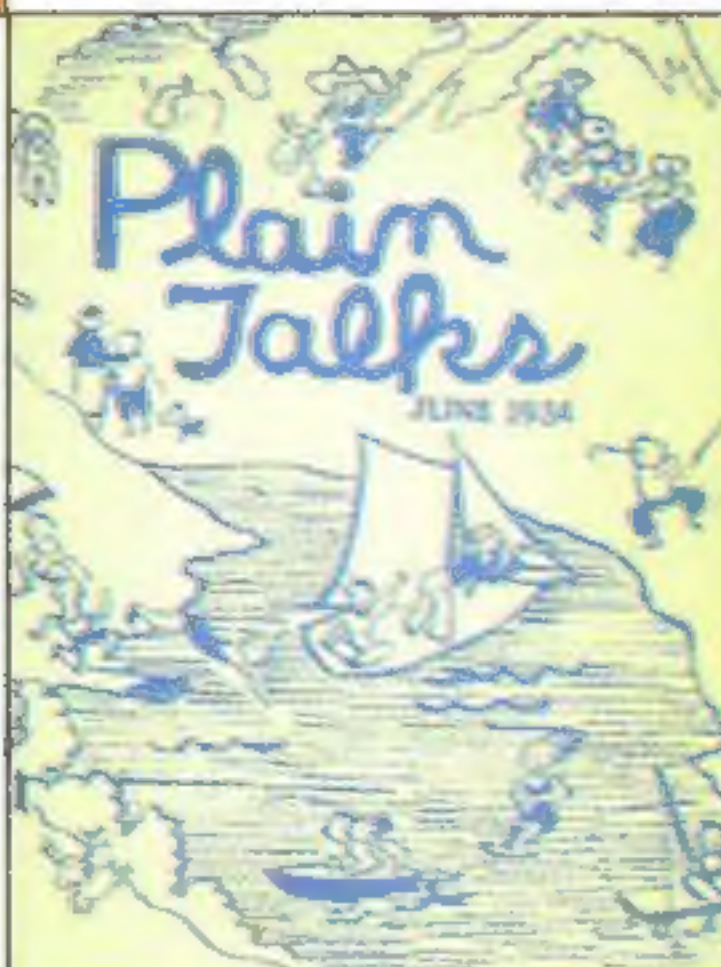
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September 1933



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October 1933



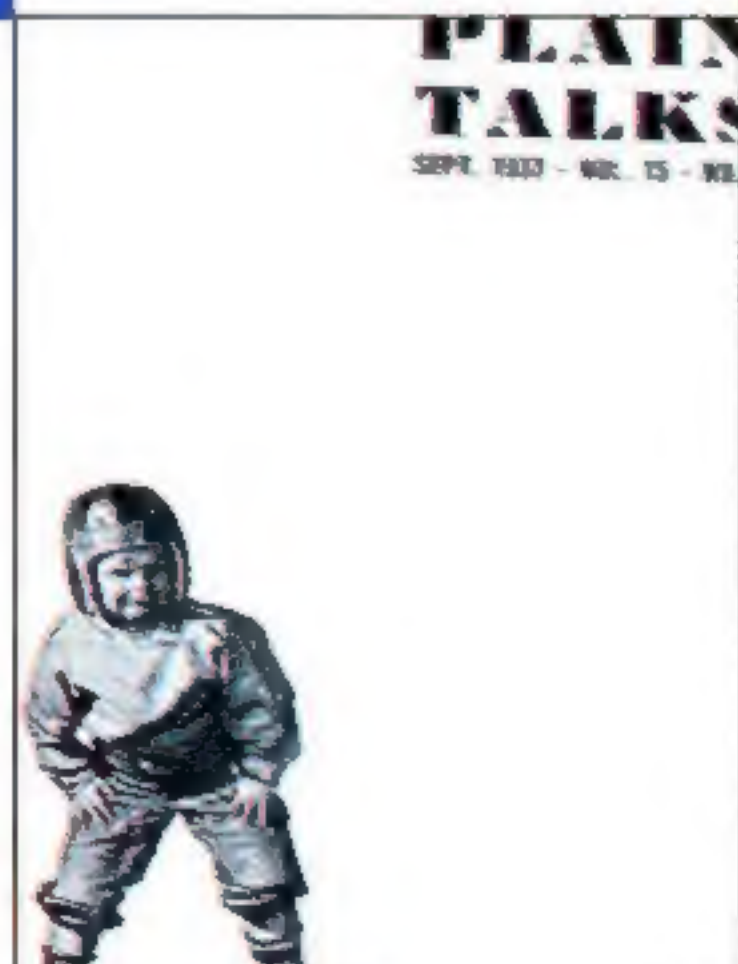
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March 1934



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June 1934



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August 1934



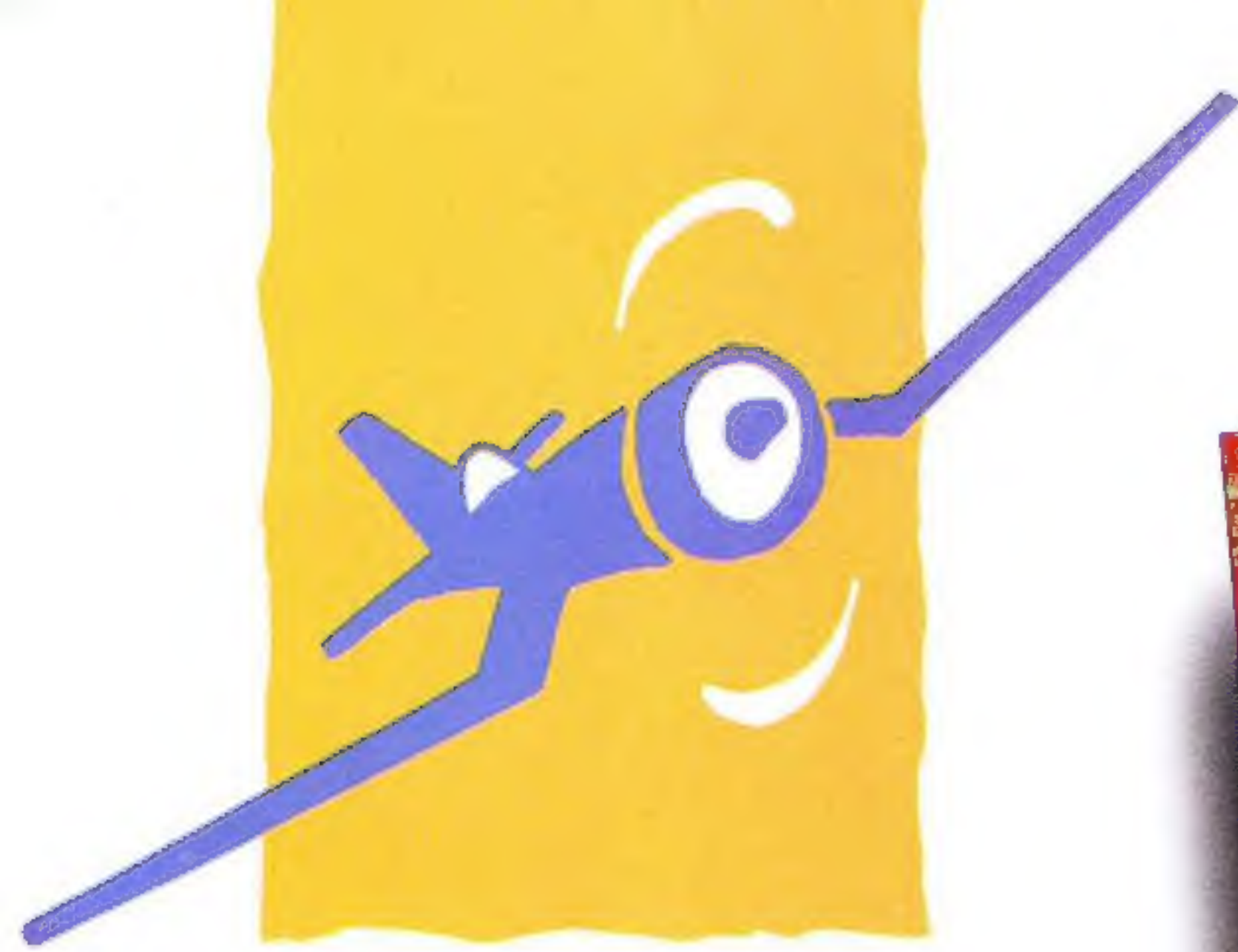
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September 1937



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October 1937



▶
January 1938



'40s

by Jerry Stokes
Managing Editor 1943-57

The decade of the '40s were momentous years and were particularly significant for Gulf States. It was during this period the nation suffered a global war and later another localized war, both impacting Gulf Staters. Then, of tremendous importance to corporate Gulf States, the nation's Utility Holding Company Act resulted in the company becoming an independent electric operating company.

World War II endeavors involved the Gulf States area in several ways. As a supplier of electrical energy to the industries and suppliers that would be called upon to provide the ingredients for a war effort, Gulf States Utilities became a dominant participant in the war effort.

With the resulting increased electric loads, the company's revenues increased \$672,846 in the first nine months of 1941. And the loads continued to grow. The service area refineries began to expand with Esso, Gulf and Pure Oil being some of the first.

With all the increases on the industrial front, there were offsetting curtailments on the civilian home front. Rationing became the order of the day. Gas, rubber products, metals, building materials, even foods, became in short supply for civilians. Many employees started riding to work by pumping their own bicycle wheels.

The Herculean struggle to outfit the armed forces on land, sea and in the air and support these efforts by production on the home front caused traumatic dislocations in the GSU workforce. A large number of Gulf Staters were called to serve. From

mid-1940 to August 1945, there were 377 employees in the military.

In 1943, one quarter of GSU revenues were derived from sales of electric energy and steam to the oil industry for supplying the war effort. The war ended abruptly when, on Sept. 2, 1945, the Japanese surrendered after being hit with atomic bombs.

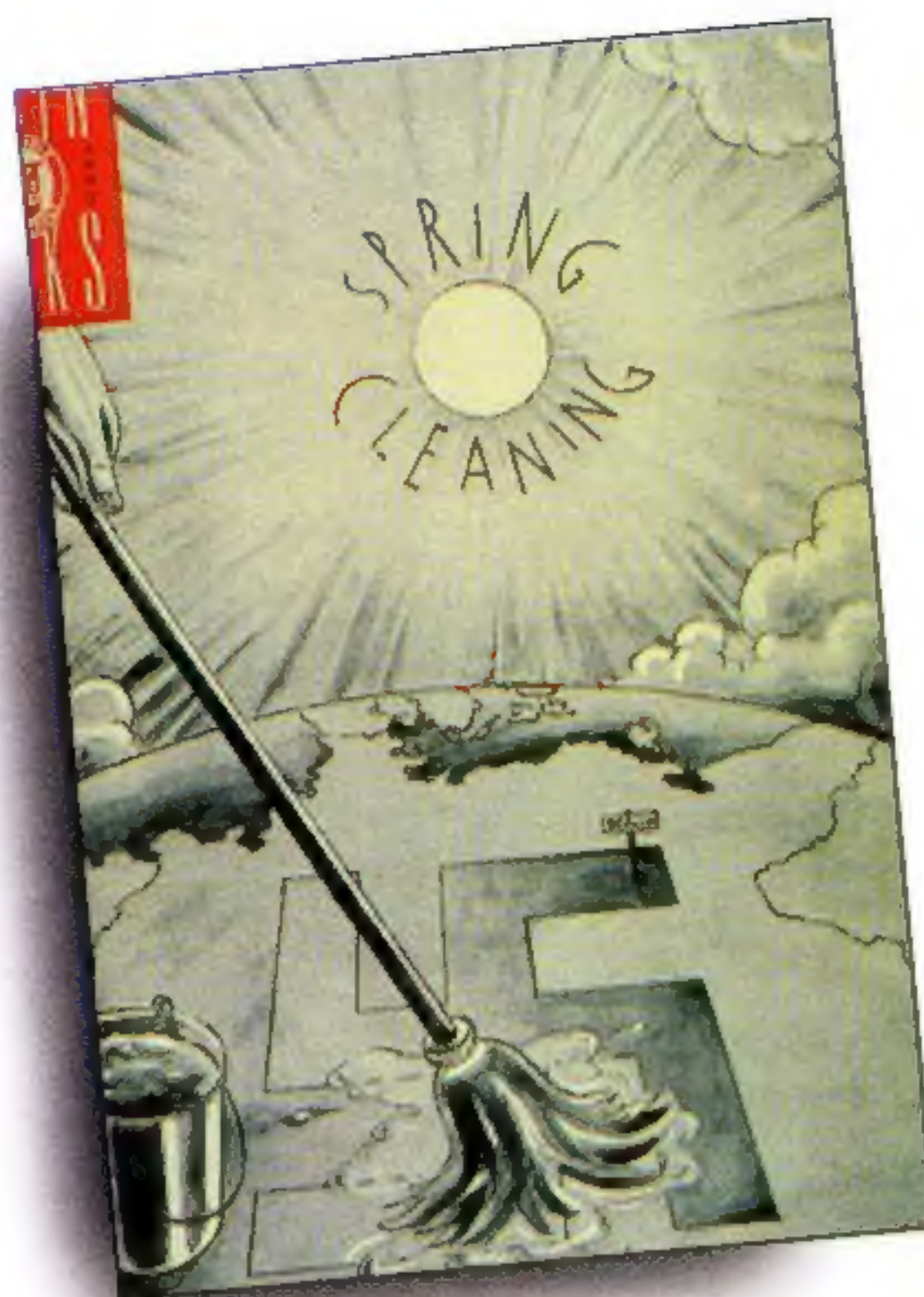
At Christmas time in 1945, 143 employees returned from active duty. There were still 232 on duty and some leaving for post-war duty. Thus ended three years and eight months of war, but in addition to many injuries and much hardship, seven Gulf Staters gave their lives.

Contrary to expectations, the post-war economic outlook was not as bad as feared. Gross revenues for 1945 were \$17,920,000, the most the company ever took in.

In the spring of 1947, GSU became an independent electric operating company after 22 years as a subsidiary of Engineers Public Service Co., itself a subsidiary of Stone & Webster Corp.

The GSU service area continued to grow and in 1948 the company had 157,000 electric customers. To keep up, a fourth unit, a 40,000 kilowatt turbo-generator was being built at Neches Station. To help carry this power, substations were enlarged and a 260-mile, 132,000 kilovolt transmission line from Baton Rouge to Dayton was under construction at a cost of \$5.7 million. Another item was a \$1 million service center for Beaumont.

Thus ended the decade of the 1940s as it concerned GSU and its loyal, dedicated employees.



1945



August 1941



1942



1945



1945



1945



1947



1947



March 1942



April 1942



September 1942



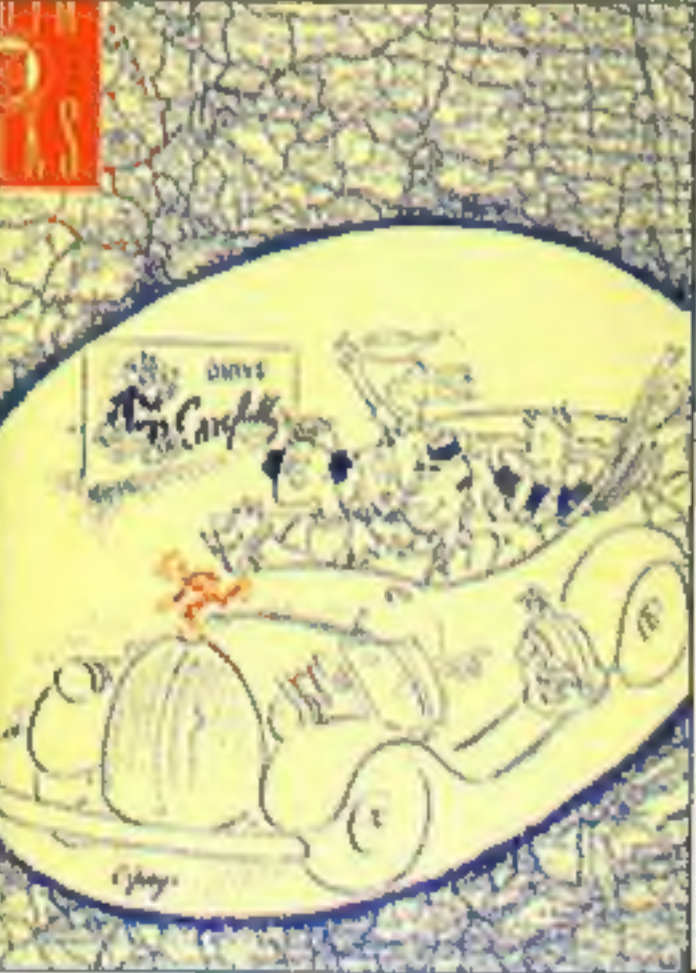
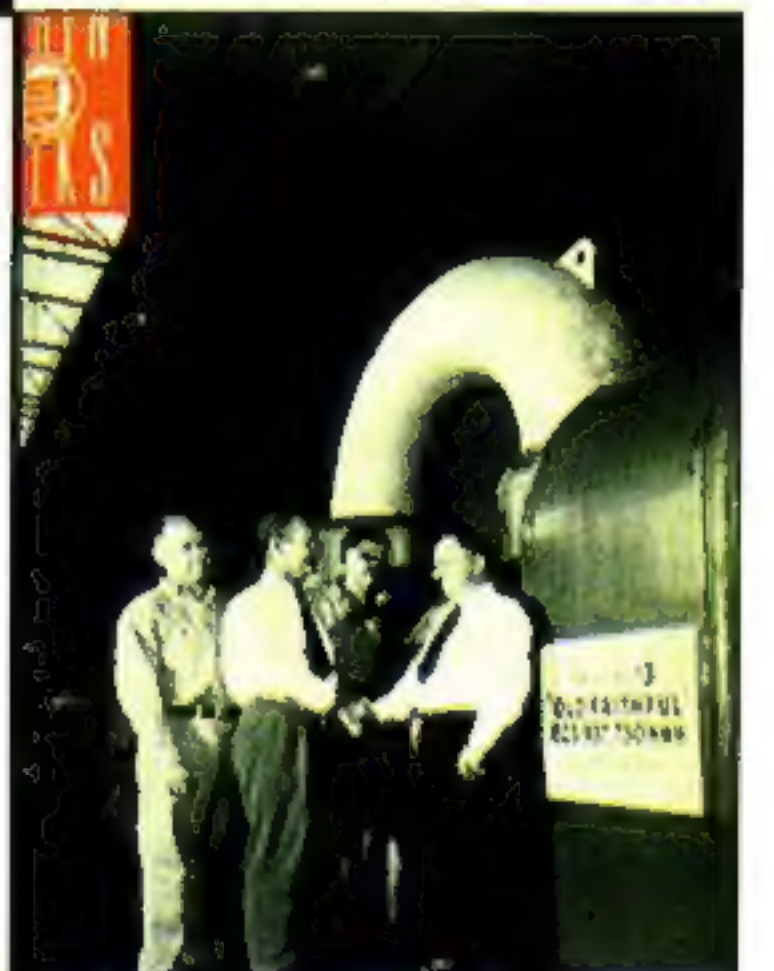
1944



1944



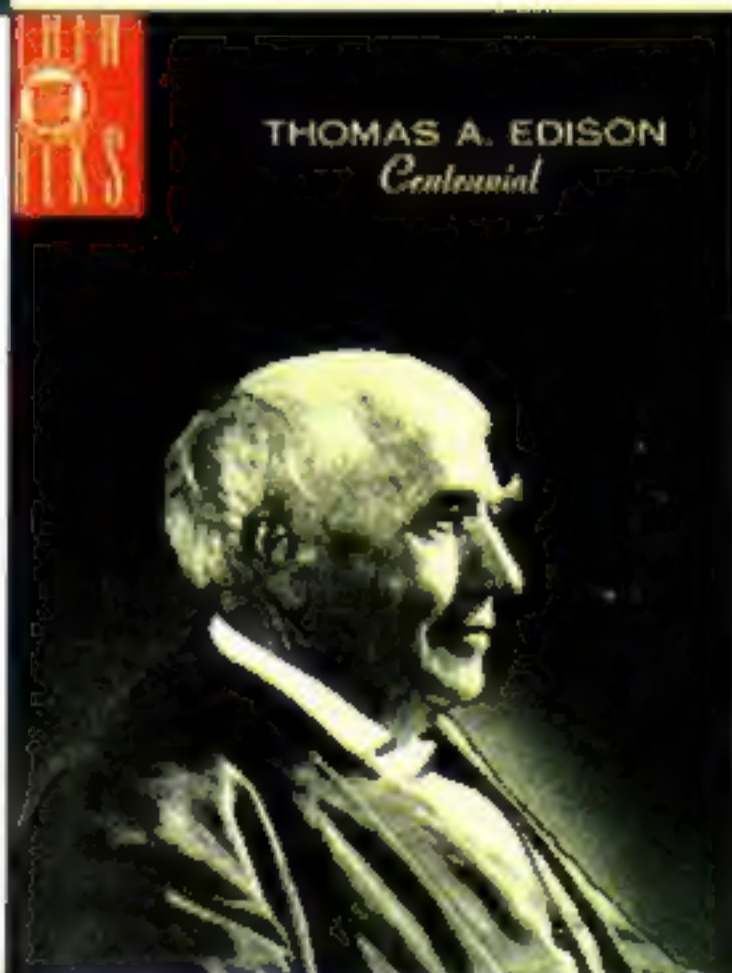
1944



1945



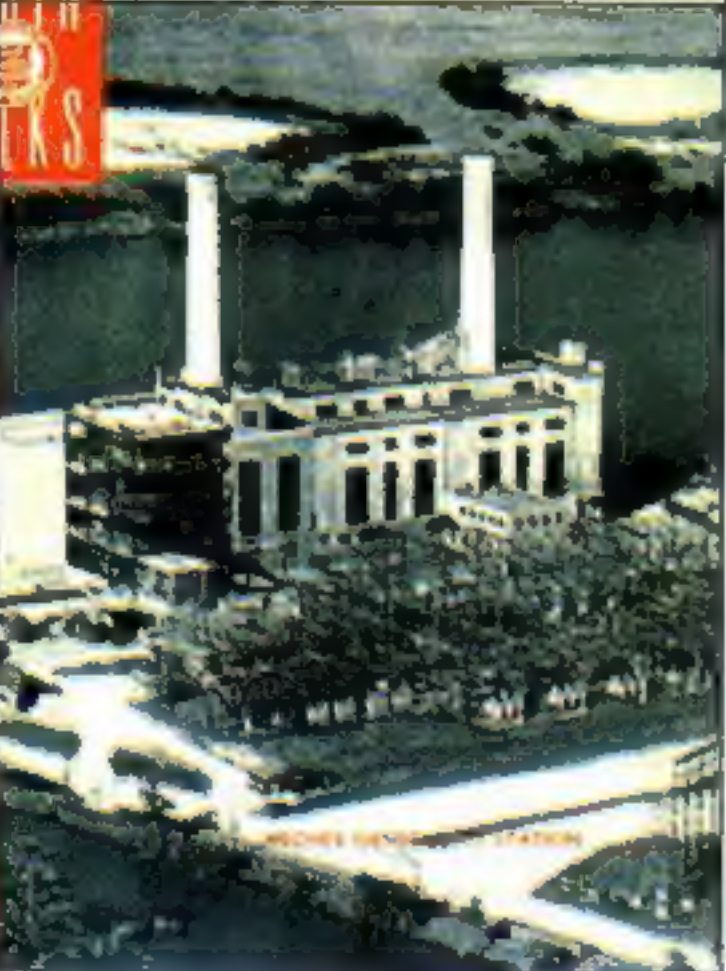
1945



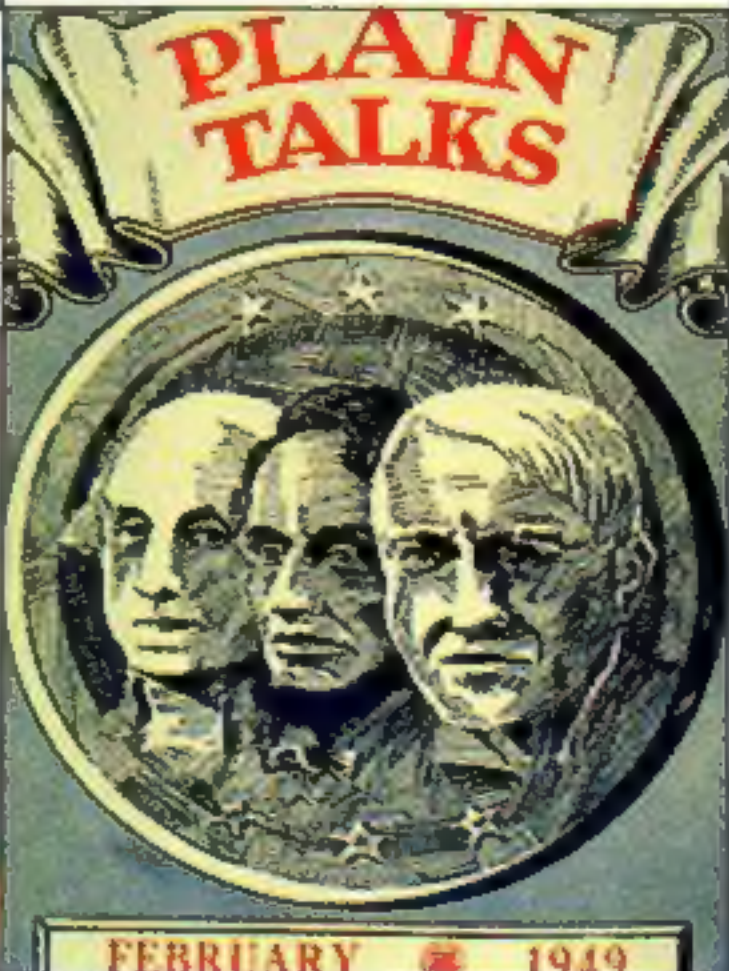
1945



1946



1946



February 1949



October 1949





'50s

by Jack Worthy
Managing Editor 1958-67

America entered the 1950s as an emerging world power. The free world and its people looked to the United States for leadership and security from the threat of Communism.

North Korea, with the backing of Communist China, invaded South Korea in June 1950. Finally, in 1953, the Chinese agreed to a cease-fire and the war came to an end.

While Americans were fighting Communists on foreign soil, Joseph R. McCarthy was fighting Communists in America. At Wheeling, W. Va., the U. S. senator began an inquisition into suspected Communists at high levels of society and government. A series of publicly-televised hearings exposed the senator's unethical and mostly unfounded attacks and resulted in a new entry in Webster's dictionary: McCarthyism.

As Americans celebrated the cure for polio discovered by Jonas Salk, the quest for civil rights had just begun. From Rosa Parks on a bus in Birmingham, Ala., to integration at Central High School in Little Rock, Ark., civil rights became a central political issue that endures today.

Elvis Presley hit the airwaves with "Heartbreak Hotel" and "Hound Dog" while America took to the air with the start of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration program or NASA.

The beginning of GSU's unprecedented growth and that of the Louisiana/Texas area it served was well chronicled in the pages of *Plain Talks* in the 1950s.

Company advertisements carried

the theme—"Live Better... Electrically," and featured the Gold Medallion Home and the coming of age of the all-electric heat pump. It was the age of selling electric service throughout the nation and Gulf States was among the leaders in building home and commercial load, a great deal of which was made possible by the existing expansion and additions of the petro-chemical industry.

The growth, built on a solid foundation, brought on the need for line, substation and power plant construction. Willow Glen Station, Nelson Station and, later, Sabine Station were added to supply the demand.

This great challenge of growth amounted to 10 percent a year and was met by an experienced and dedicated group of around 3,000 employees.

The "GSU Family," known in their respective communities, was deeply rooted. They were an integral part of their schools, churches and civic activities, contributing their time and talents for a better quality of life for all.

Through the pages of *Plain Talks*, employees kept abreast of the company, its employees and their families, from Denham Springs to Conroe. Pictures and stories captured the Little League games, the Christmas parties, service awards and, yes, some tragedies, in the then monthly publication. *Plain Talks* was a company magazine. But it was mostly about people. People with big hearts and a seemingly unending dedication to serving others.



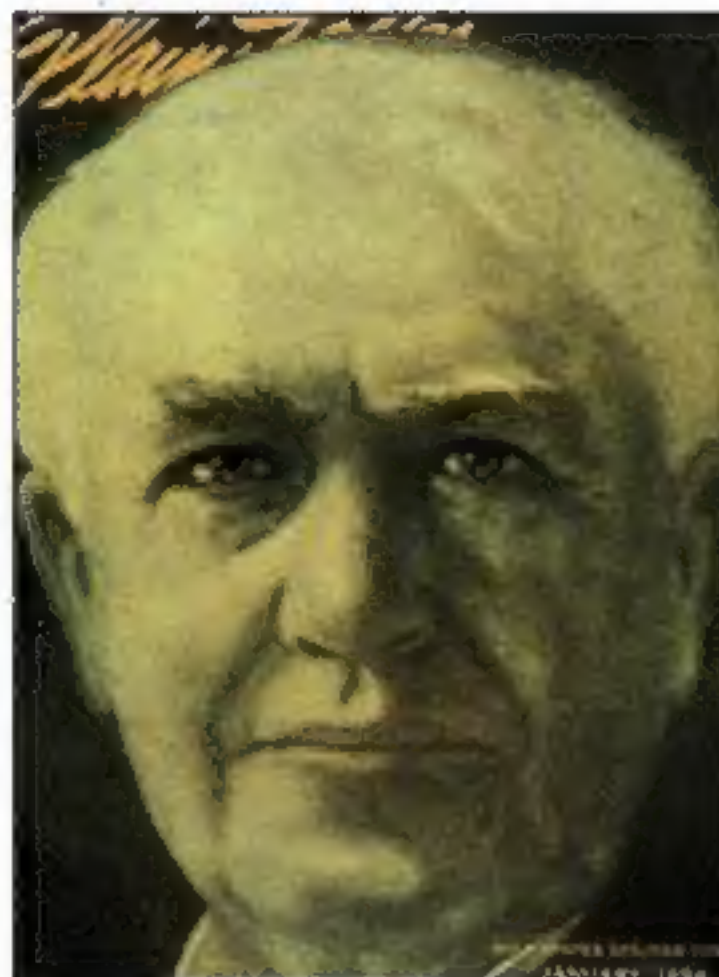
March 1952



February 1951



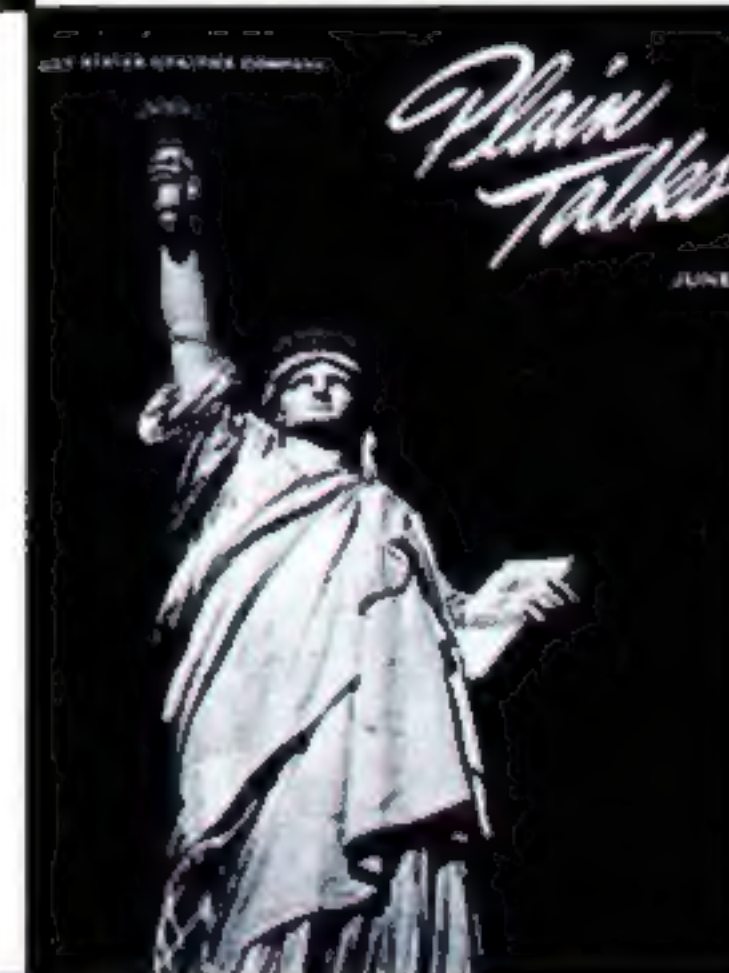
October 1952



January 1954



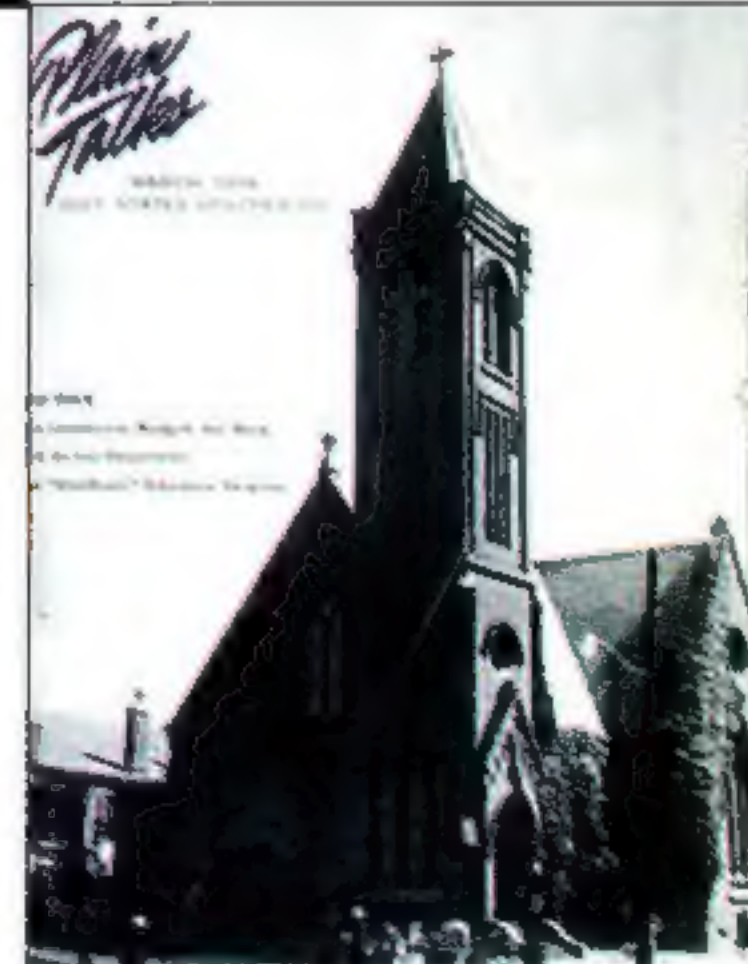
March 1954



June 1955



March 1959



August 1958



'60s

by Jim Turner

Associate Editor, Editor, Director 1951-78

The 1960s was a turbulent, exciting decade for both our country and our company.

The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were in the early stages of a bitter cold war. Following eight relatively calm years with President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the year 1960 saw Democrat John F. Kennedy eke out one of the most narrow presidential election victories in history over Republican Richard M. Nixon.

The danger of nuclear war was ever present, and there were incidents such as the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba, the installation and subsequent removal of Russian missiles from that island, and mounting tensions throughout southeast Asia which finally led to our massive military involvement in Vietnam.

The assassination of President Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, created "who done it?" controversy that continues today. Lyndon Johnson's presidency gave us the "Great Society" and the "War on Poverty." Those expensive legacies, coupled with growing civil rights movements and increasingly bad news from Vietnam, helped lead to the election of Richard Nixon as president in 1968.

Meanwhile, GSU was experiencing one of its most prosperous periods, punctuated by rapid growth in customers of all categories and accompanying soaring electricity use. This resulted in a large construction program.

By 1960, *Plain Talks*, at age 36, had become a regular monthly publication, crammed with news about the company, employees and the area, and eagerly awaited by approximately 3,000 employees,

retirees and other recipients.

The January 1960 editorial comment predicted, "In the area we serve, the population has more than doubled in the last 10 years. There's every reason to believe that our rate of growth will continue to outstrip the national average."

For the most part, the bold predictions came true.

One of the reasons for optimism about the future of Gulf States was the high caliber of its leadership. As the 1960s began, Roy S. Nelson headed the company as chairman of the board and president. Other GSU leaders included John Morrison, Glenn Richard and Eldon Werner.

The giant construction program included four power plants: Sabine Station, Willow Glen, Nelson Station and Lewis Creek located in the newly-named Western Division.

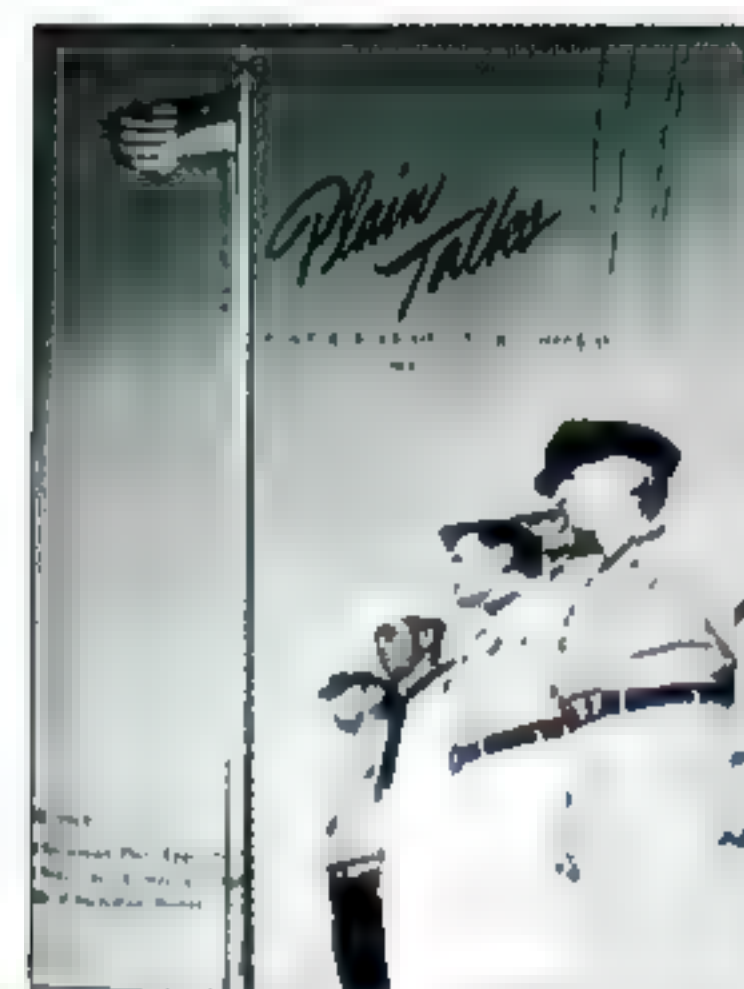
New power plants called for more high voltage lines, and the system hummed with transmission line construction throughout the decade. New offices were built to keep pace with area growth.

Records were set in the 1960s. Kilowatt-hour sales exceeded 4,000, then 5,000 for home customers' average annual use. The company's 300,000th residential customer was connected in the mid-1960s. GSU continued the national "Live Better ...Electrically" program and the sale of Gold Medallion, all-electric homes, heat pumps, ranges, clothes dryers and lighting of all kinds escalated.

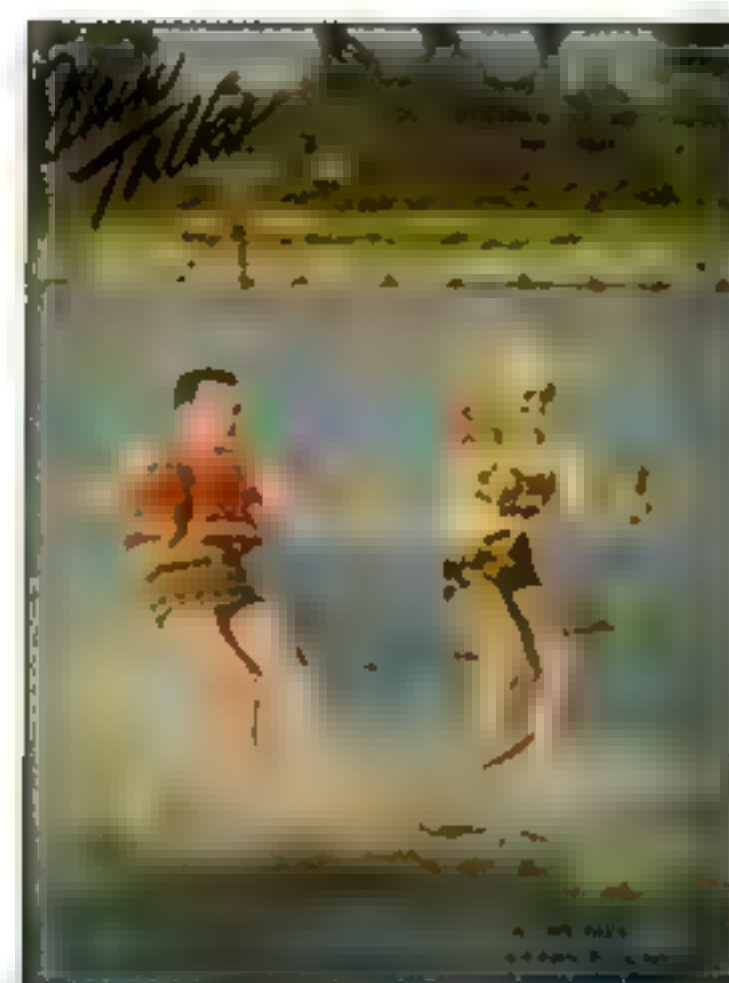
All of these newsworthy events and more were dutifully chronicled on the pages of *Plain Talks*, which had become a leader among electric utility company magazines.



July 1969



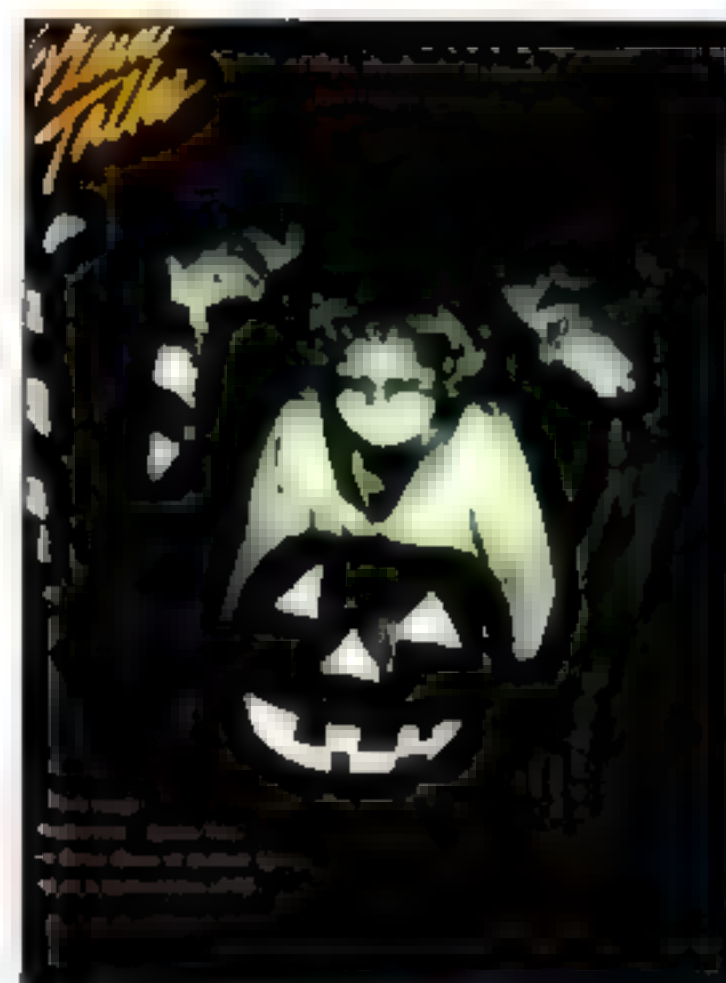
May 1960



May 1961



February 1963



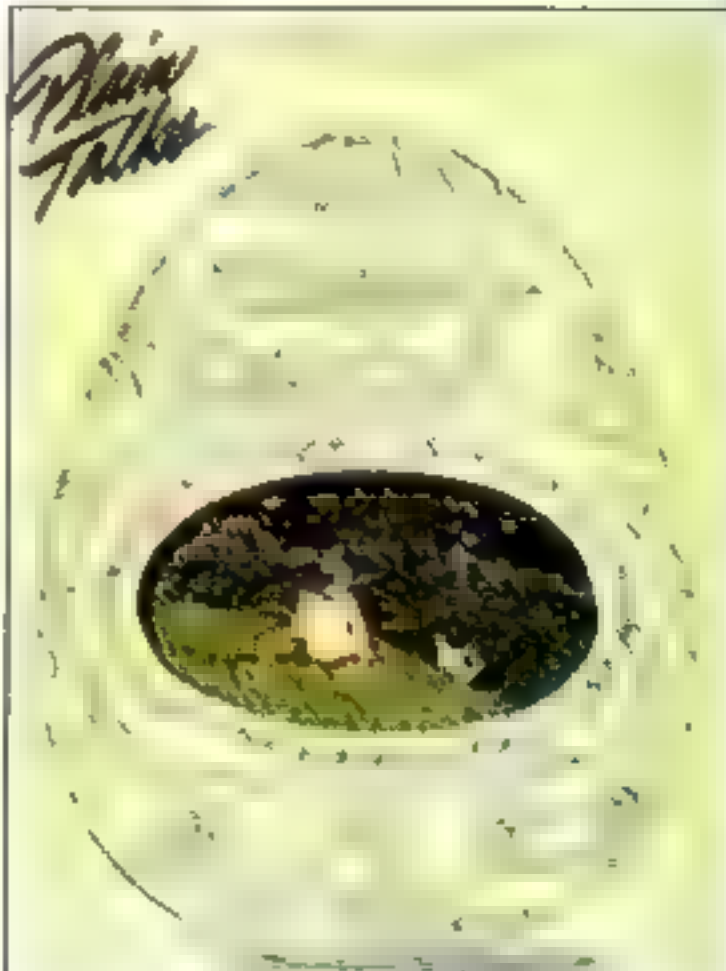
October 1962



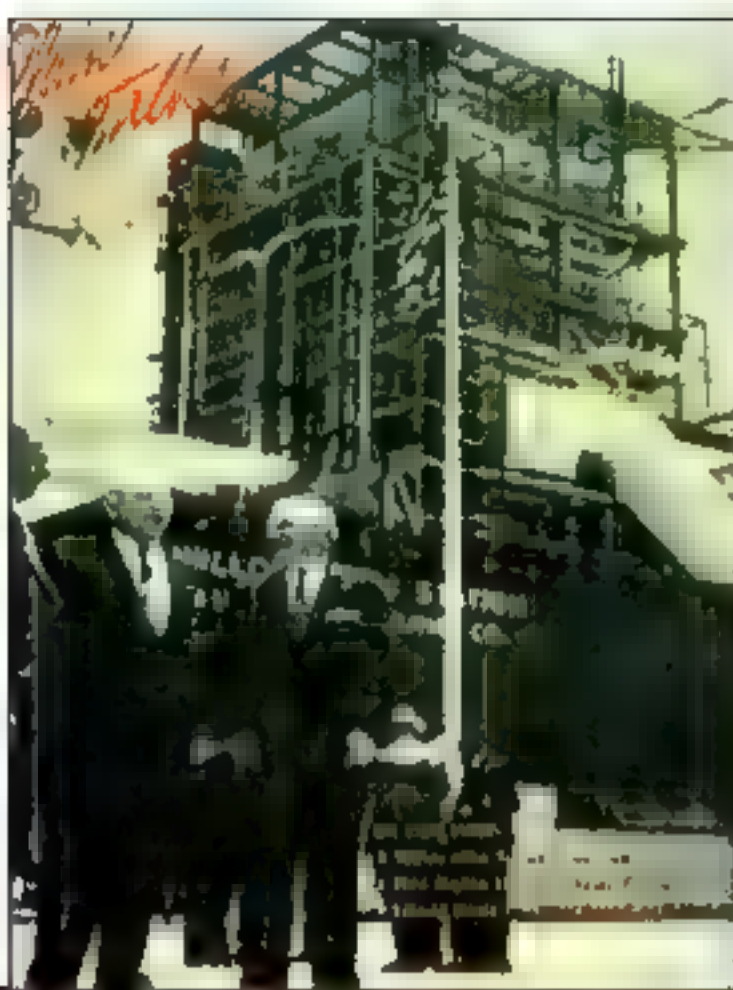
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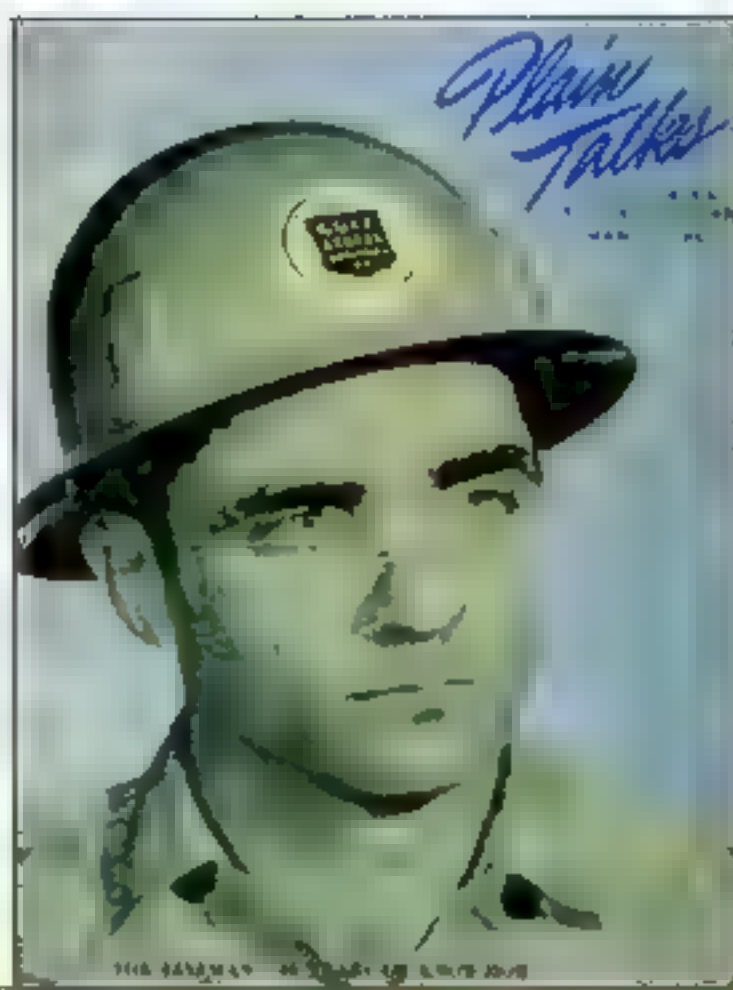
April 1967



March 1967



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July 1960



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March 1961



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April 1961



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September 1961



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January 1962



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May 1962



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April 1963



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July 1963



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March 1964



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July 1965



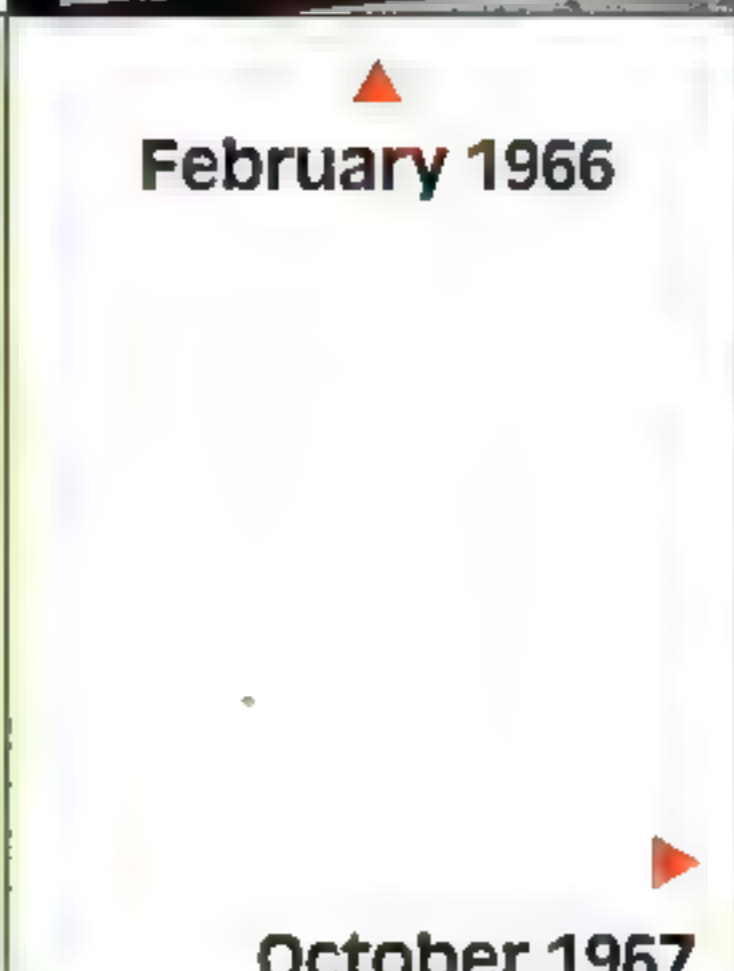
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February 1966



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August 1966



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July 1967



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October 1967

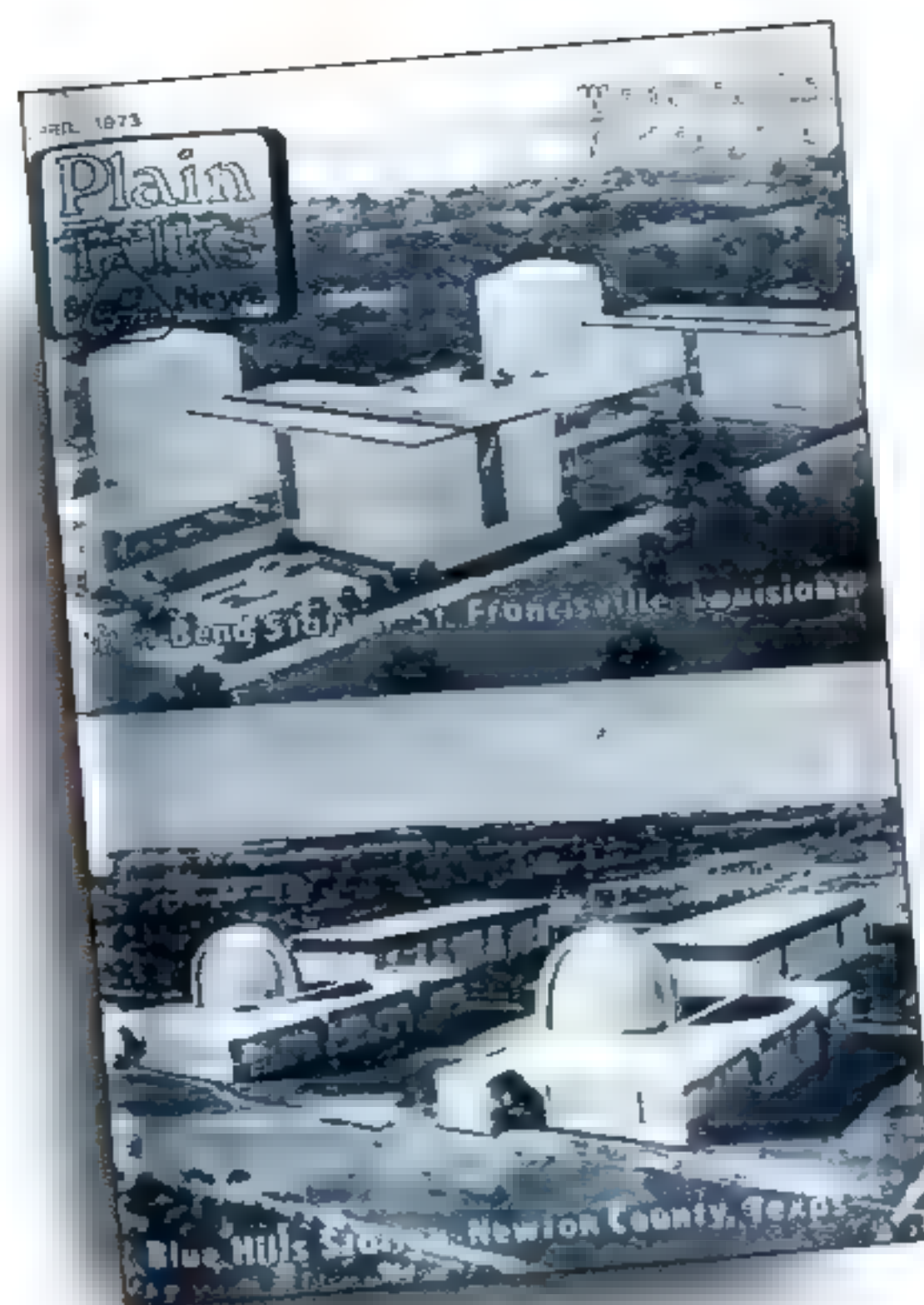


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August 1969

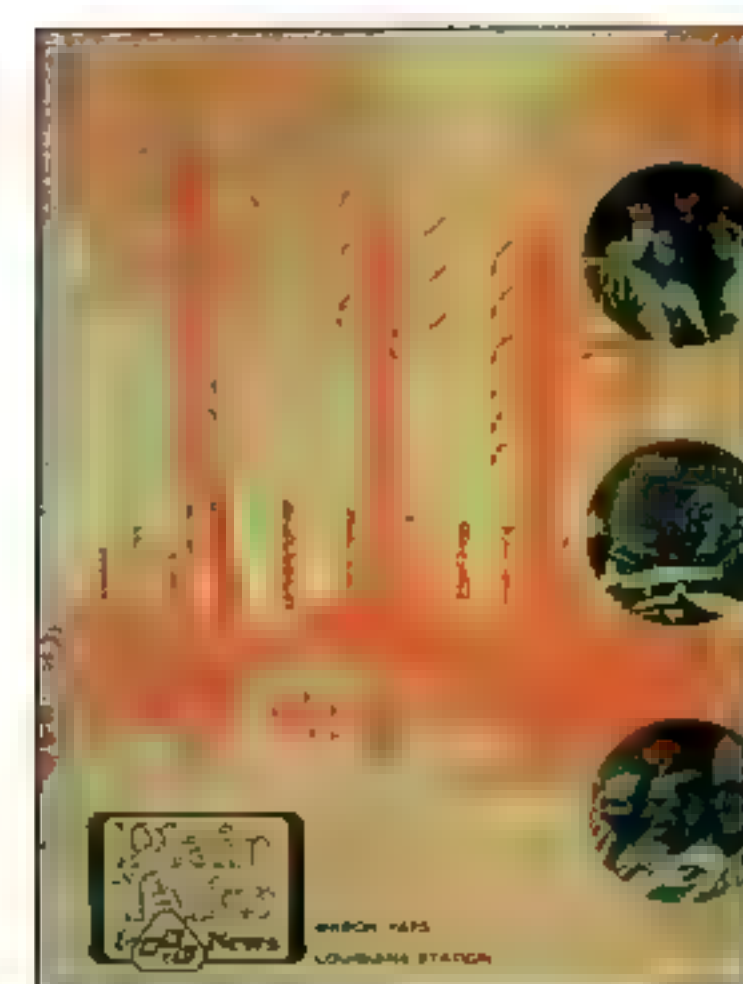




'70s



April 1973



March 1970

by Kim McMurray
Contributing Writer, Manager 1979-93

It is safe to say that one decision made in 1979 propelled Gulf States into the most turbulent period in its history and played a key role in eventually forcing the company to seek a merger partner.

The February 1979 decision to resume construction of River Bend altered the destiny of Gulf States and its employees. Even if you assume the decision to move ahead with that project was correct, there will always be that lingering question: Where would Gulf States be today if it had not been for River Bend?

That's one of those hindsight questions that never can be answered. Using hindsight to make judgments isn't fair, but it certainly is fun.

In early 1970, for instance, the head of GSU's rate department (who no longer works here) was quoted in *Plain Talks* as saying: "If inflation continues as it has for the last year, there is a possibility we'll have to adjust rates in the '70s."

At the time, it had been 18 years since GSU had received a general rate increase and, although the regular base rate increases that caused us so many political and customer relations problems didn't really start until the 1980s, there were incredible increases in fuel costs during the latter part of the '70s that presented GSU and its employees with many challenges.

It was the OPEC oil embargo in 1973 that ended utilities' long-standing corporate tranquility and set off a chain of events that sent GSU and its employees scrambling

to find fuel to keep the power plants running, to cope with hefty increases in fuel costs and to plan for the future by moving ahead with River Bend, among other things.

Although the River Bend decision was the dominant story as the 1970s ended, much of the decade had been marked by a major expansion of GSU's fossil generating capacity. Between 1970 and 1974, Nelson 4, Willow Glen 4 and Lewis Creek 1 and 2 were all brought on-line — a total of 1,660 megawatts. Later in the decade came the Nelson 6 coal plant and the company's last major fossil addition, the Sabine 5 gas unit.

Veteran Gulf Staters still tell war stories about the great strike of 1975. It lasted 25 weeks and gave hundreds of management employees a new appreciation for what meter readers, linemen and other rank and file workers have to endure.

There was another first for GSU in the '70s that many employees probably don't remember—unless you were one of those directly involved. As *Plain Talks* reported in a December 1973 story that would have made the *National Enquirer* proud, six Nelson Station employees saw a UFO on Oct. 17, 1972. It was a saucer-like craft that "zoomed through clear skies" with "red and green flashing lights." A drawing even accompanied the article.

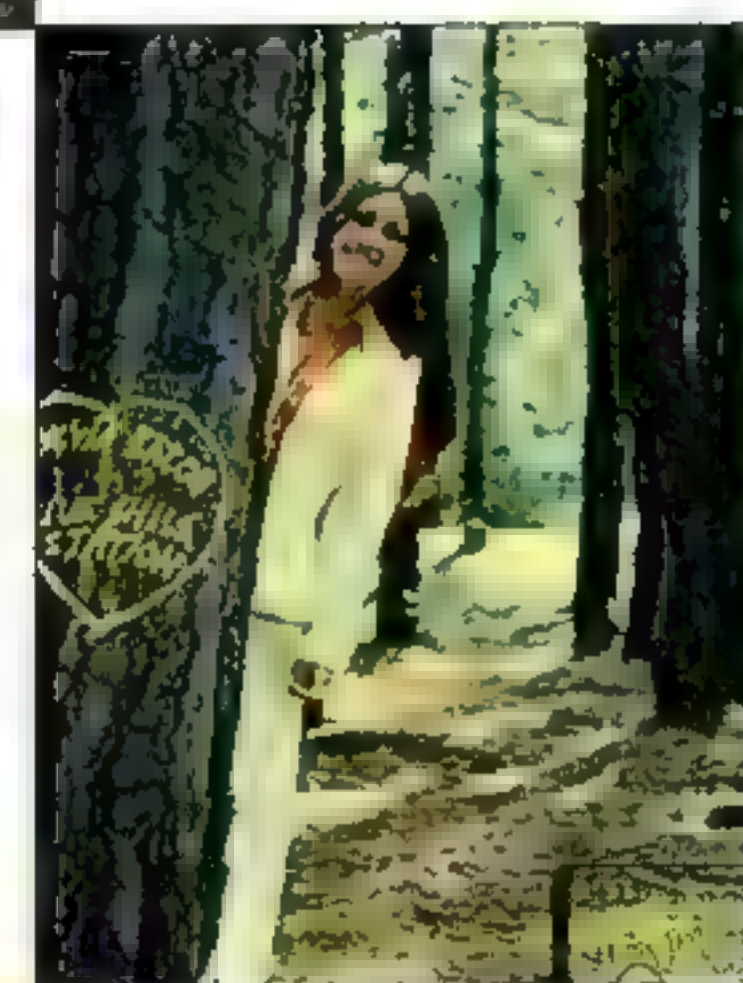
Flying saucers aside, the 1970s marked the beginning of a painful period of change and challenge for GSU — a period that continues today.



April 1971



September 1972



May 1973



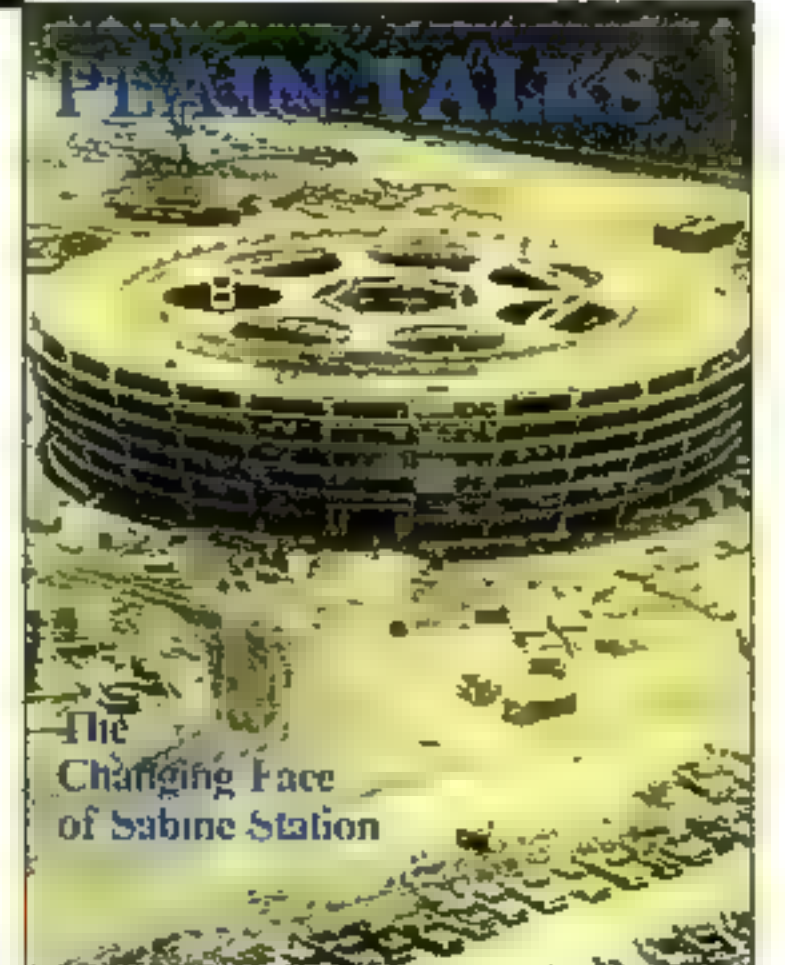
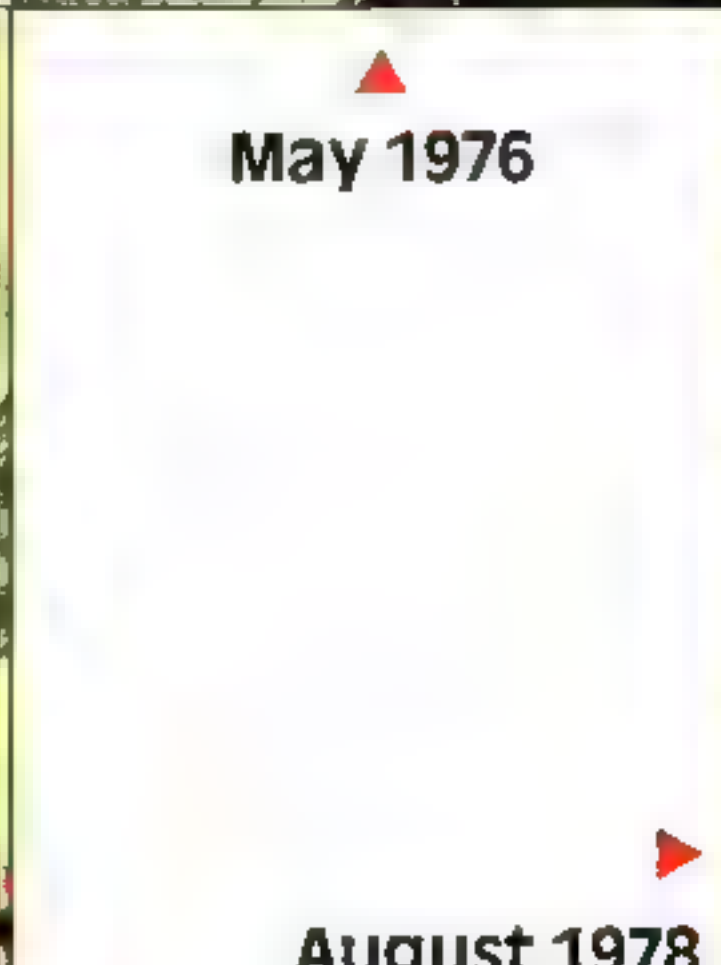
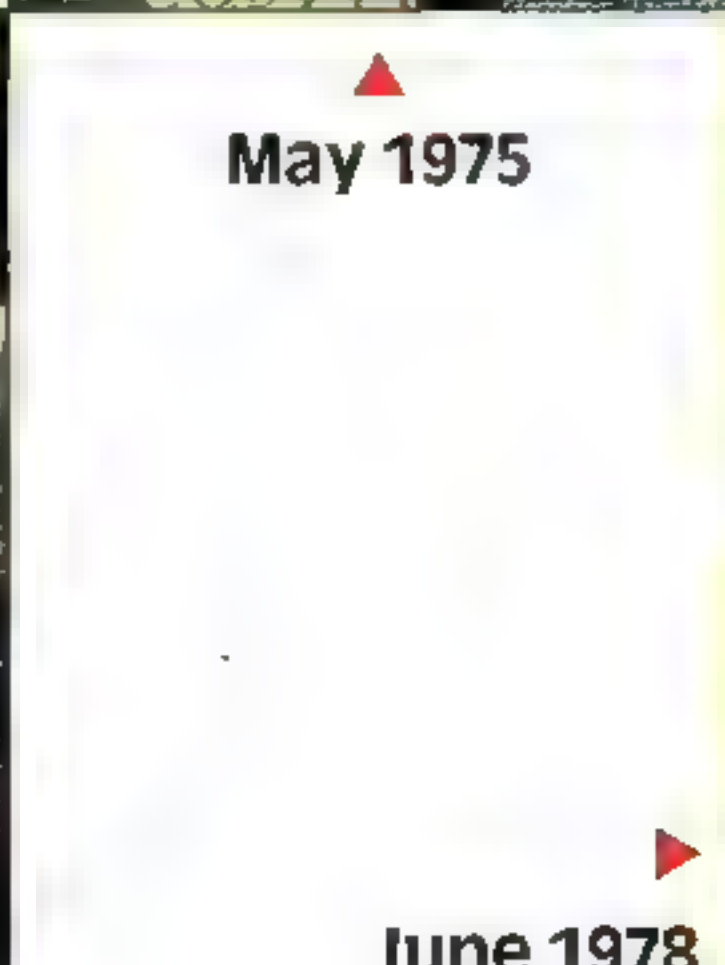
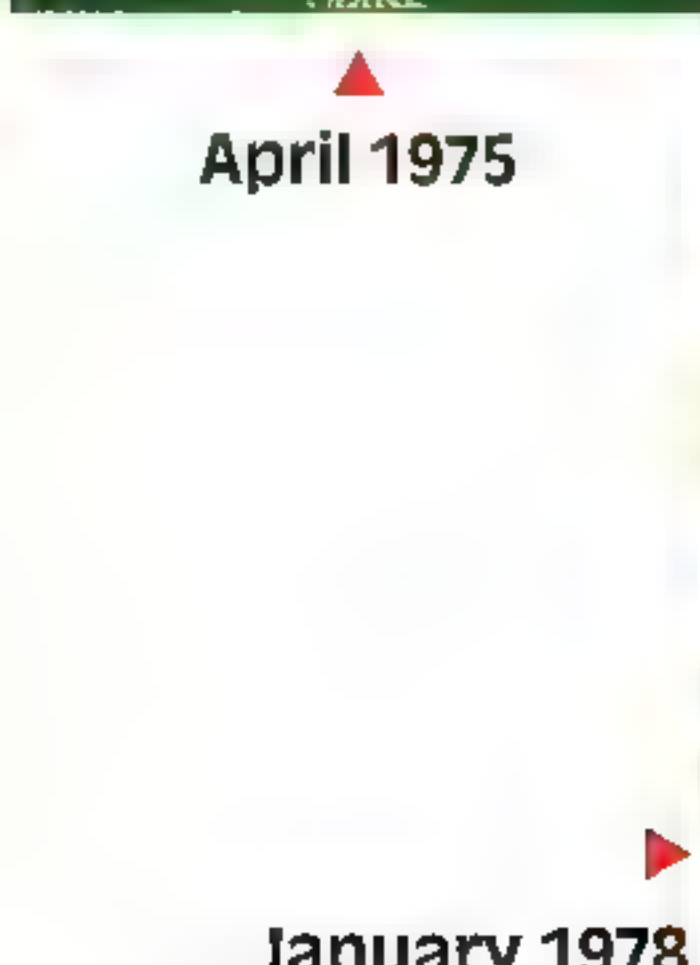
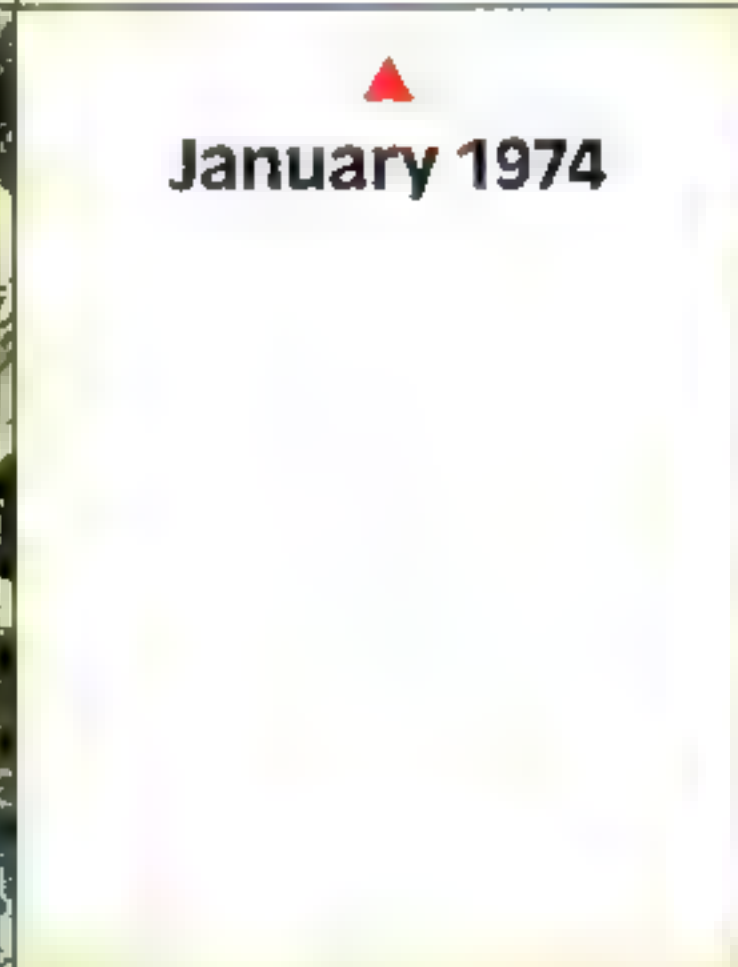
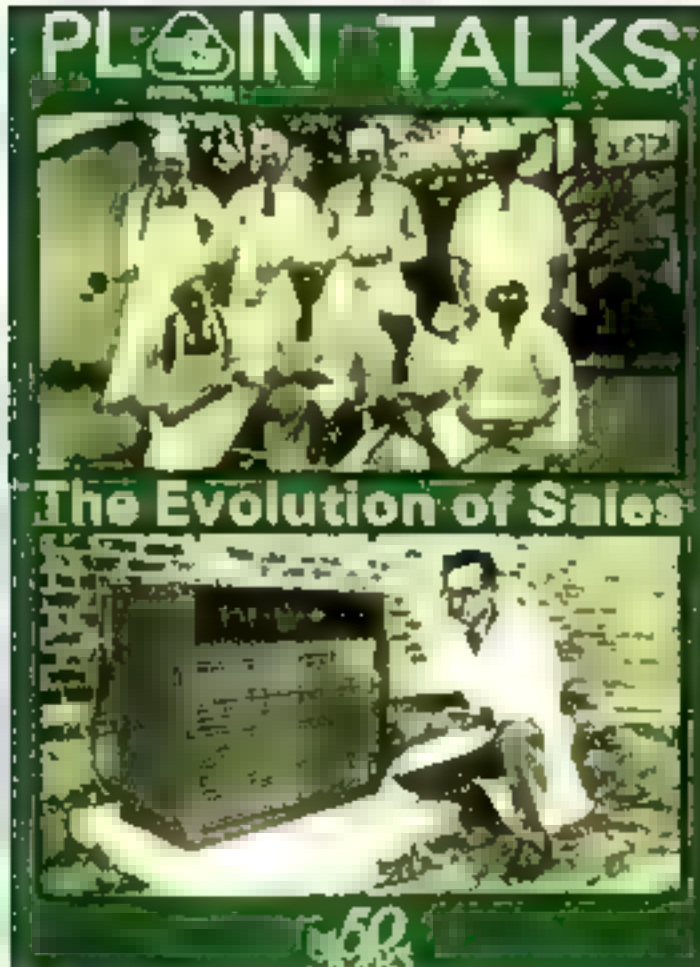
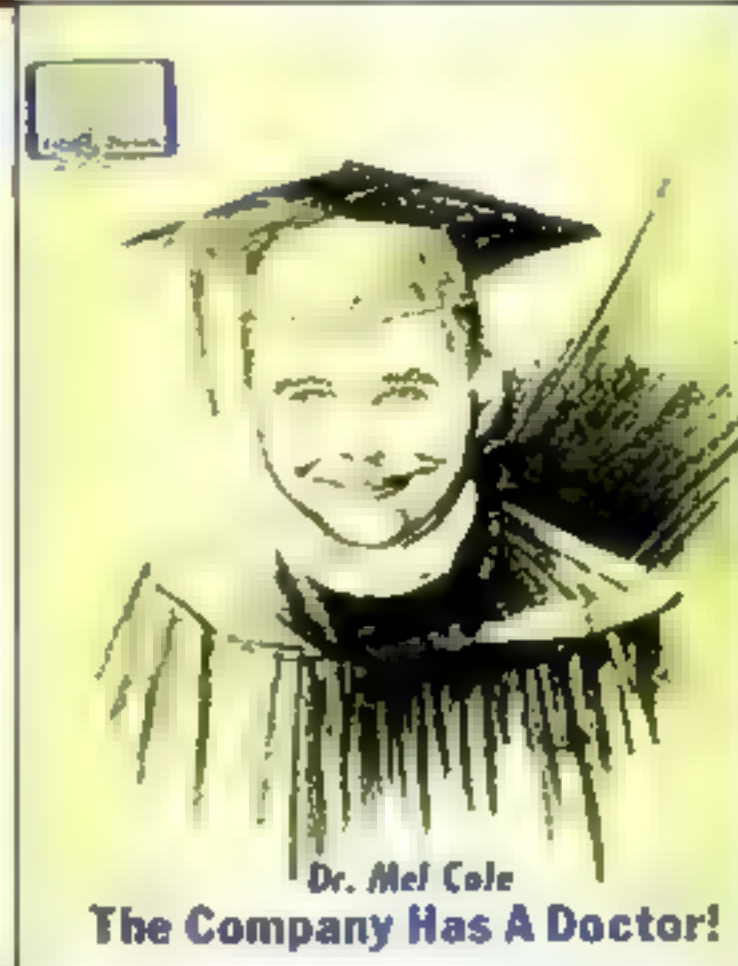
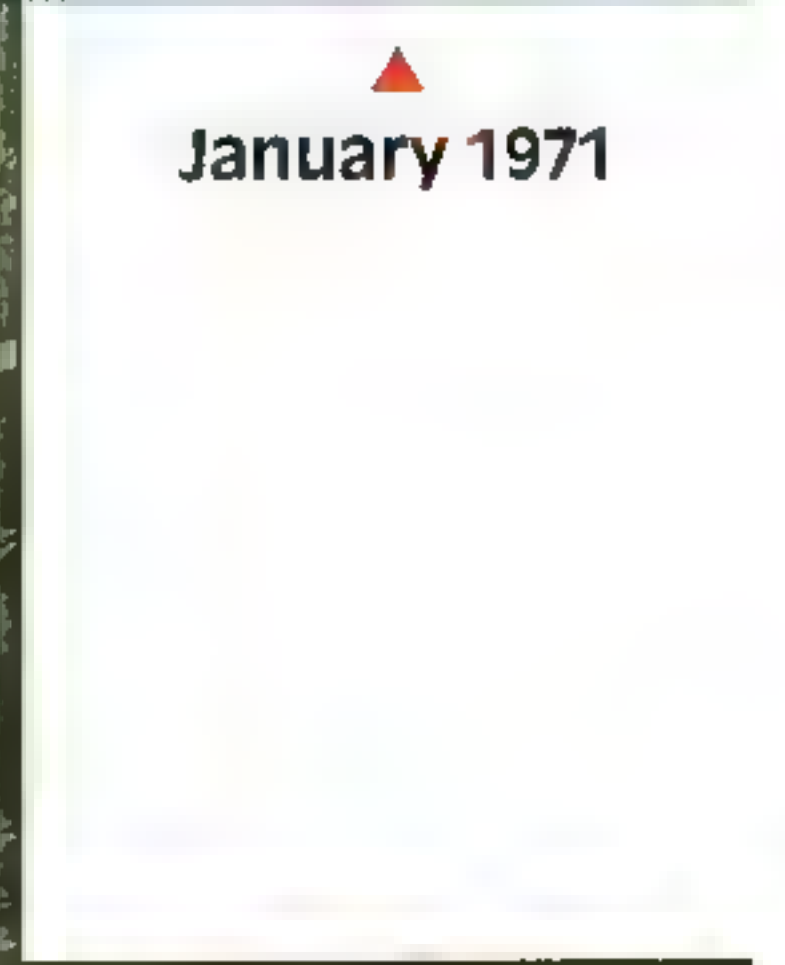
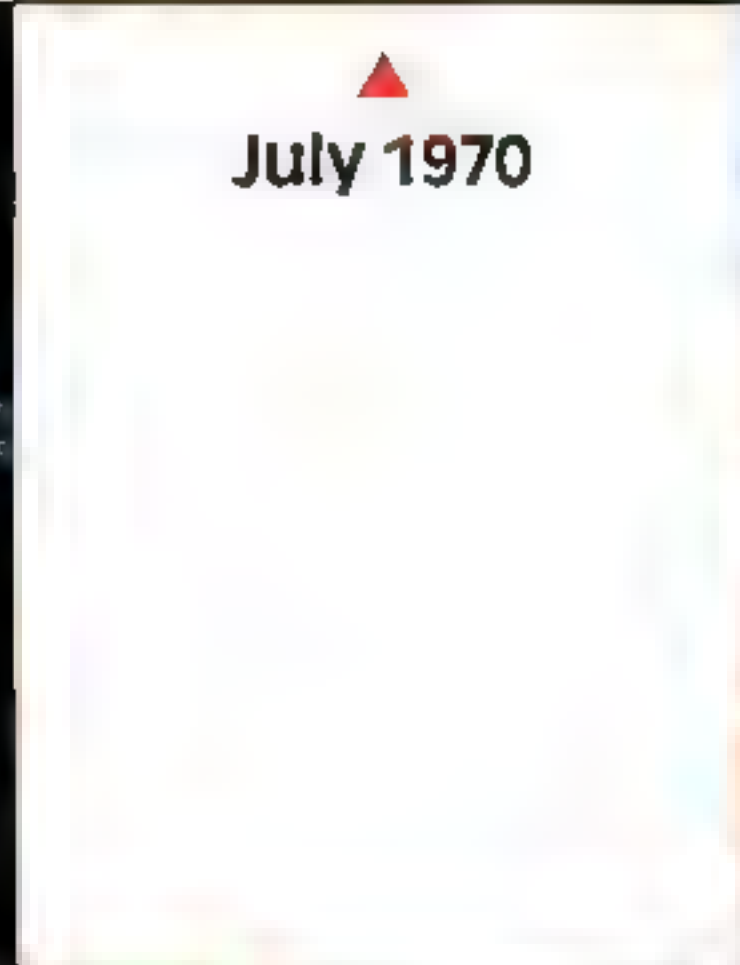
January 1975



November 1976



July 1976



July 1970

October 1970

January 1971

August 1971

April 1972

May 1972

Dr. Mel Cole
The Company Has A Doctor!

September 1973

January 1974

August 1974

April 1975

May 1975

May 1976

January 1978

June 1978

August 1978

'80s

by Susan Gilley
Editor 1980-87

The 1980s became a decade of highs and lows, for both the nation and Gulf States. In January 1980 the price of gold soared to \$802 on the New York market—a \$159 increase in a week's time. Labor statistics released that month revealed that the 1979 inflation rate was the highest in 33 years.

In 1980, a summer-long heat wave and drought assailed the Sunbelt, severely straining GSU and other electric utilities, underscoring the need for additional generation. At the time, both River Bend and Nelson Coal were under construction, part of the strategy for coping with what was then the boom economy of GSU's service area.

As the country entered the Reagan years, GSU coped with the River Bend years. Although the plant was built in record time, finally going commercial in June 1986, plant costs skyrocketed as the company complied with seemingly infinite regulatory requirements triggered by the 1979 Three Mile Island incident.

The February 1980 issue of *Plain Talks* featured an artist's conception of the completed plant.

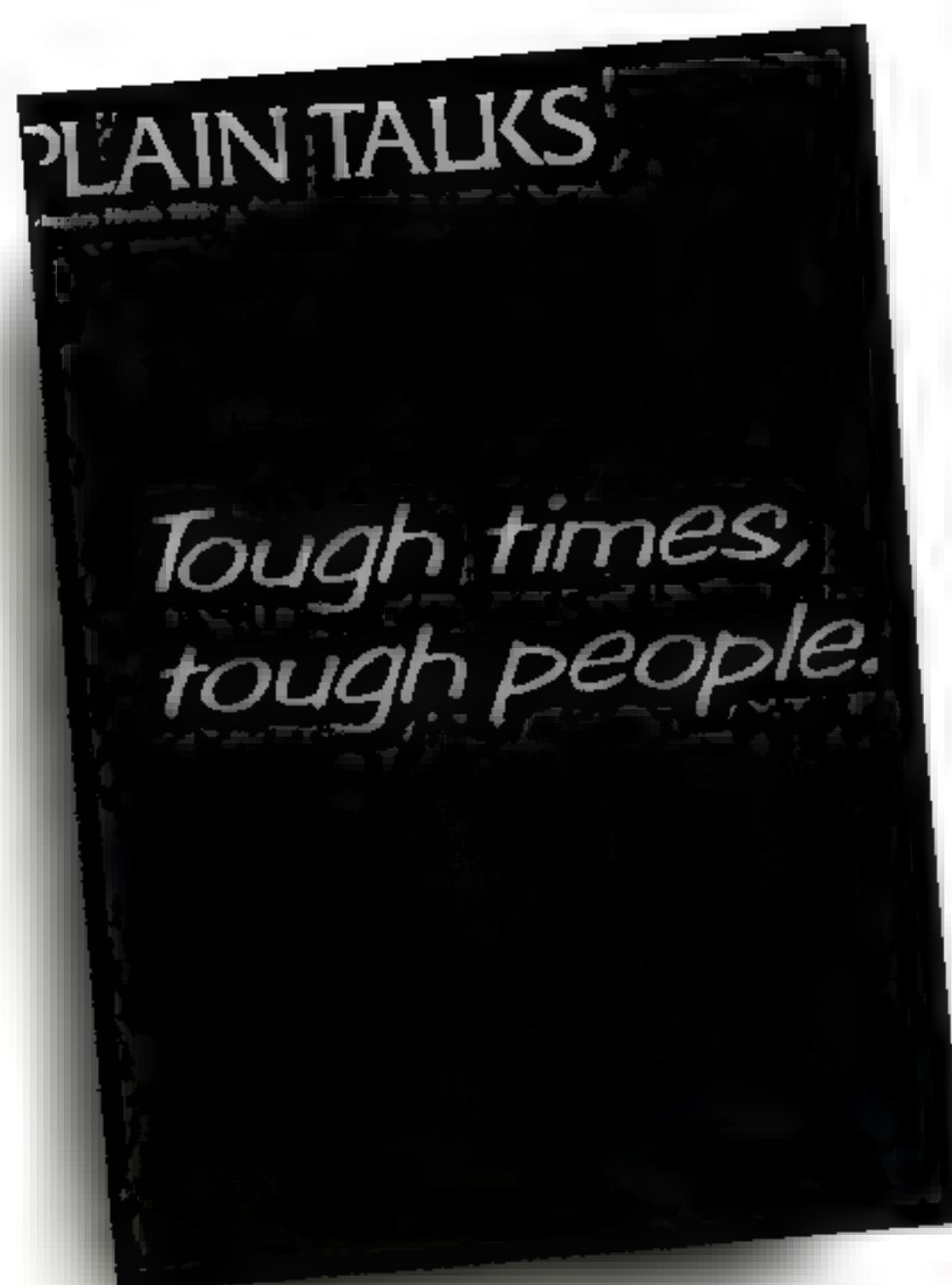
About halfway into the 1980s, the remarkable oil patch boom turned into a bust, and GSU lost hundreds of megawatts of load as industrial customers either abandoned their operations or opted for cogeneration units. Just as River Bend approached completion, the company's need for additional generation dropped dramatically. Cost-cutting measures were undertaken as the company attempted to cope. They included sweeping budget cuts, salary and wage freezes and early retirements.

The 1980s also marked a decade of change in GSU's top leadership.

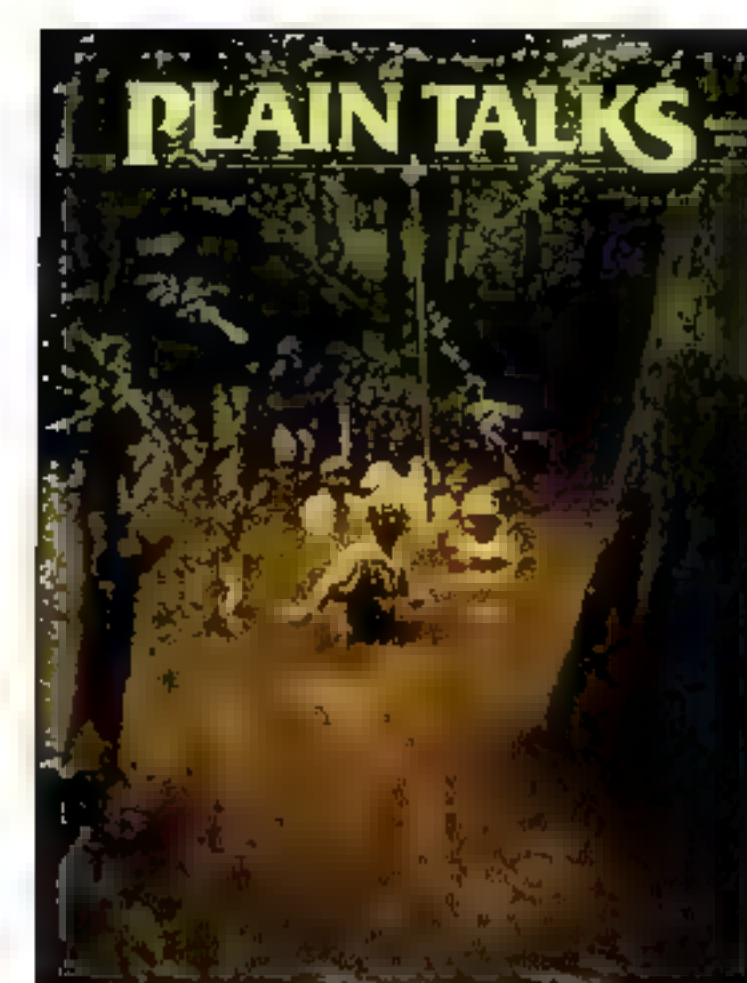
Board Chairman Don Crawford, a nationally-recognized utility executive who guided GSU through the early years of River Bend construction, took a medical leave of absence in 1981. He died a few months later. Norman R. Lee, who was then president and chief operating officer, was named acting chief executive. Later in the year, GSU corporate employees began the slow move into the newly-built Edison Plaza, which was dedicated in 1982. Dr. Paul Murrill was named board chairman and chief executive officer in 1982. Dr. E. Linn Draper became president and chief executive officer in 1986, and received the additional position of chairman of the board in 1987.

GSU ended the 1980s in a state of limbo. Although River Bend had been producing power since late 1985 and had been declared in commercial operation since mid-1986, only about half of the company's investment in the power plant had been placed in rate base. The remainder had been set-aside in Texas and disallowed in Louisiana—developments that placed GSU's attorneys in courtrooms in Texas and Louisiana.

Even so, the company's decision to emphasize economic development, competitive rates and other innovative marketing measures had begun to show some encouraging results. The outlook was bright enough for Draper to offer these thoughts in the 1989 annual report to shareholders: "Last year, I reported we were making progress down the road to financial recovery, but that the journey would not be a short one. Based on the events of 1989, I believe we are still moving ahead. There may be a few detours along the way, but we are steadily gaining ground."



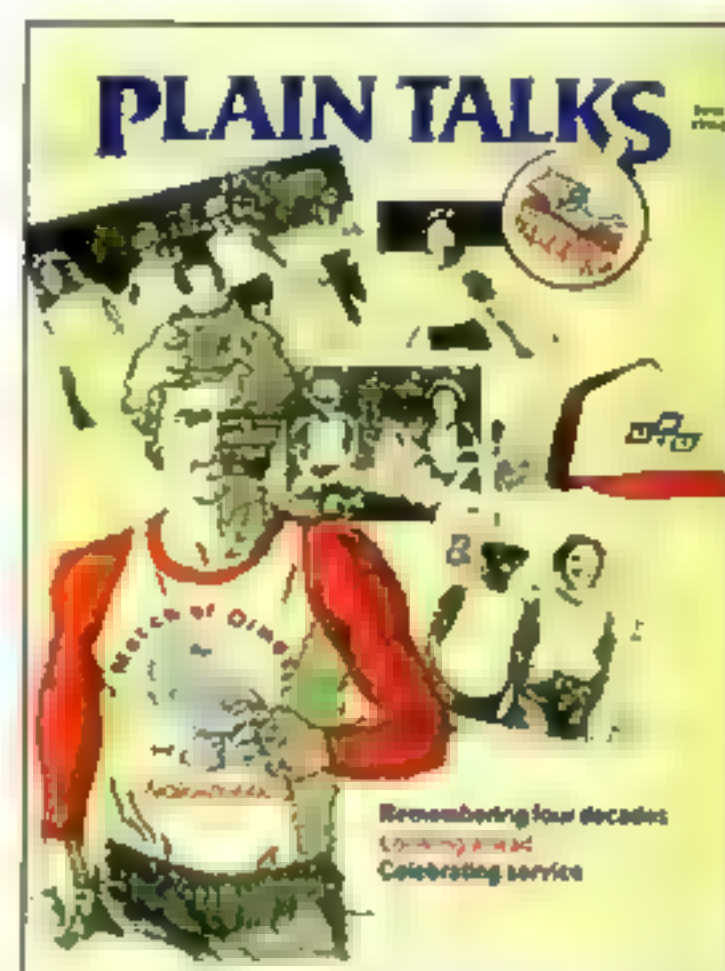
February 1987



March 1980



May 1981



June 1984



October 1984



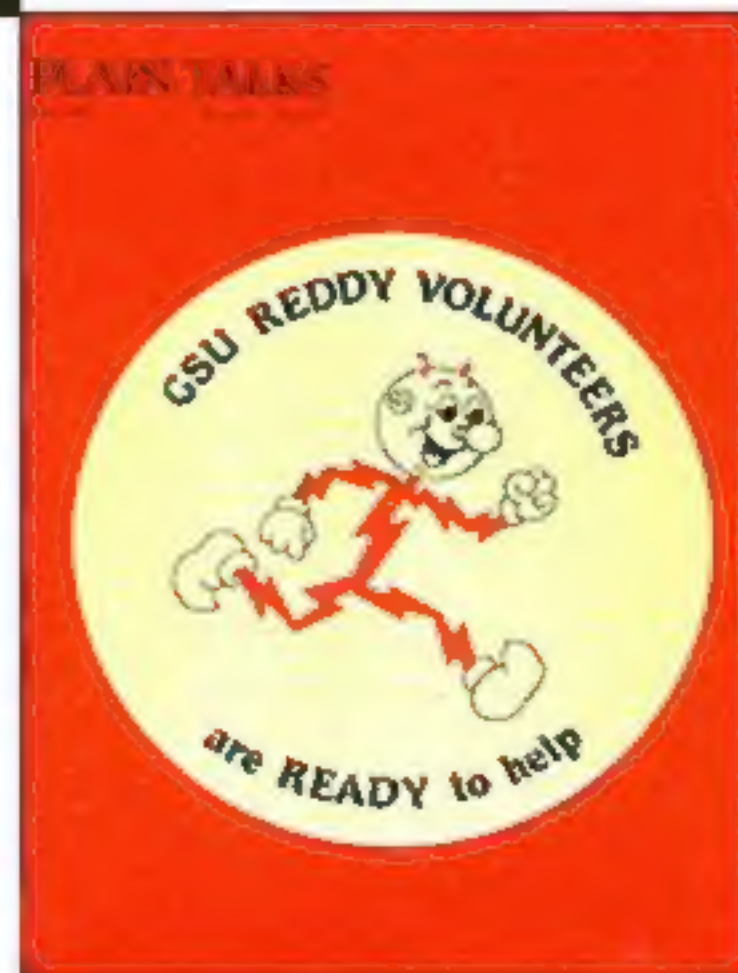
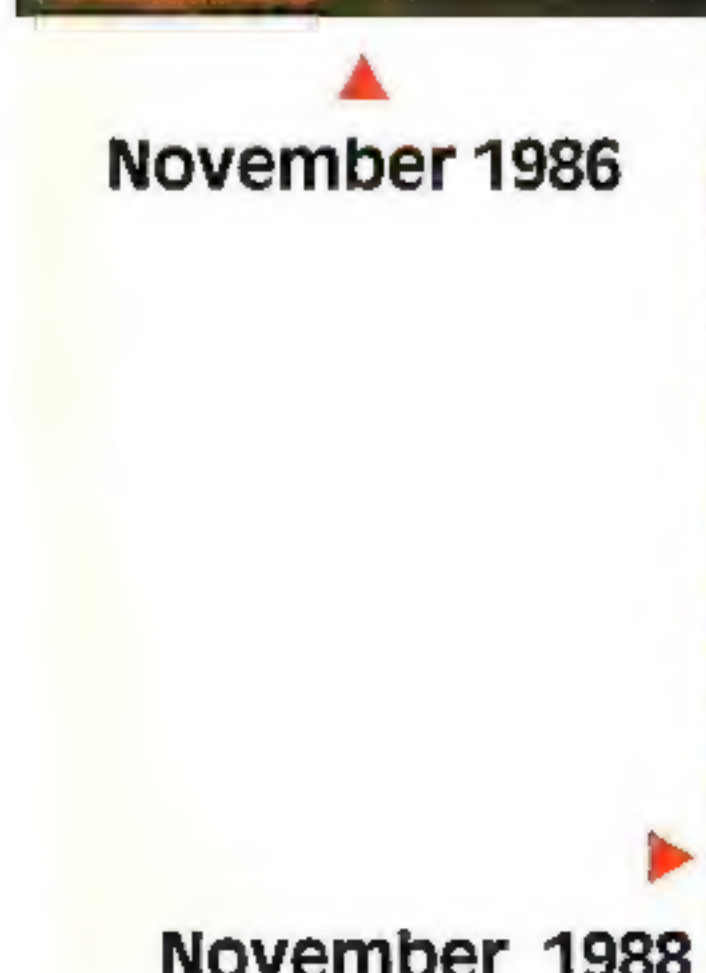
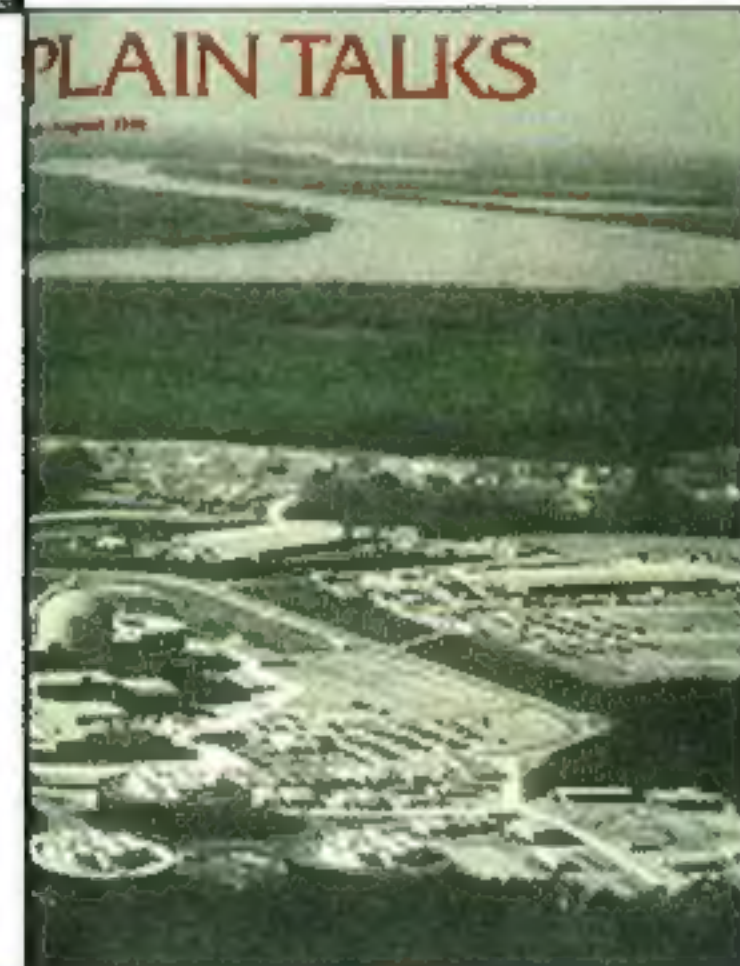
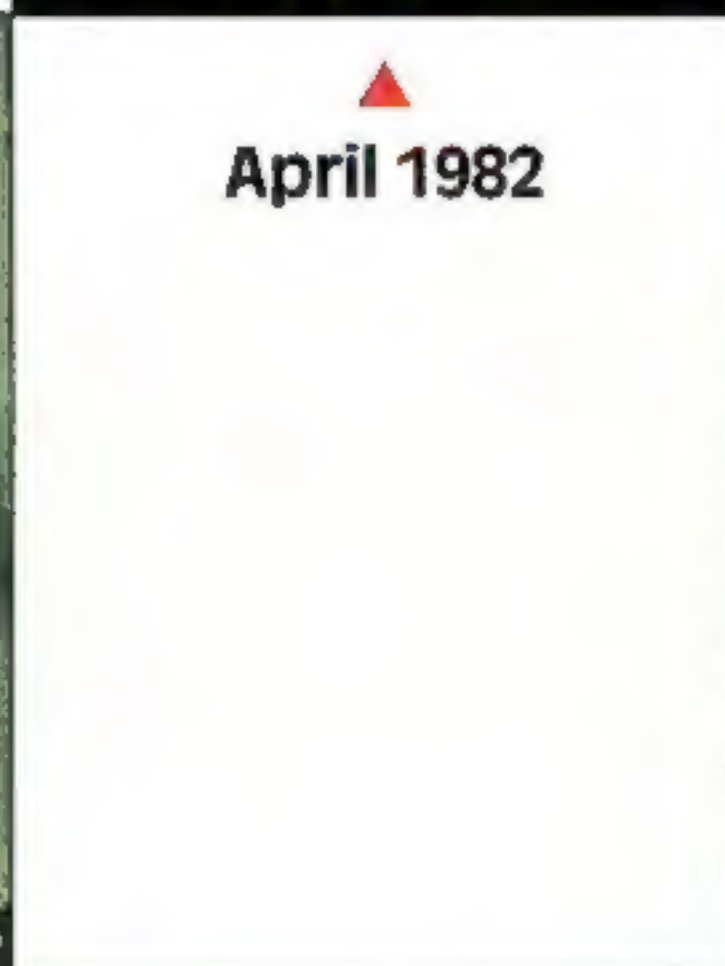
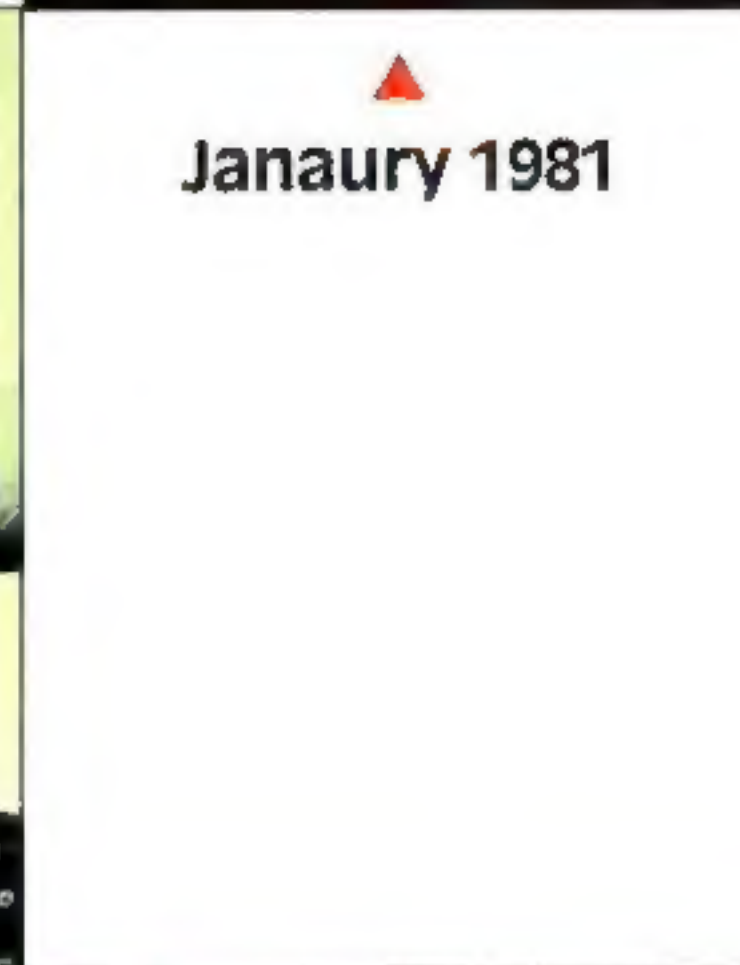
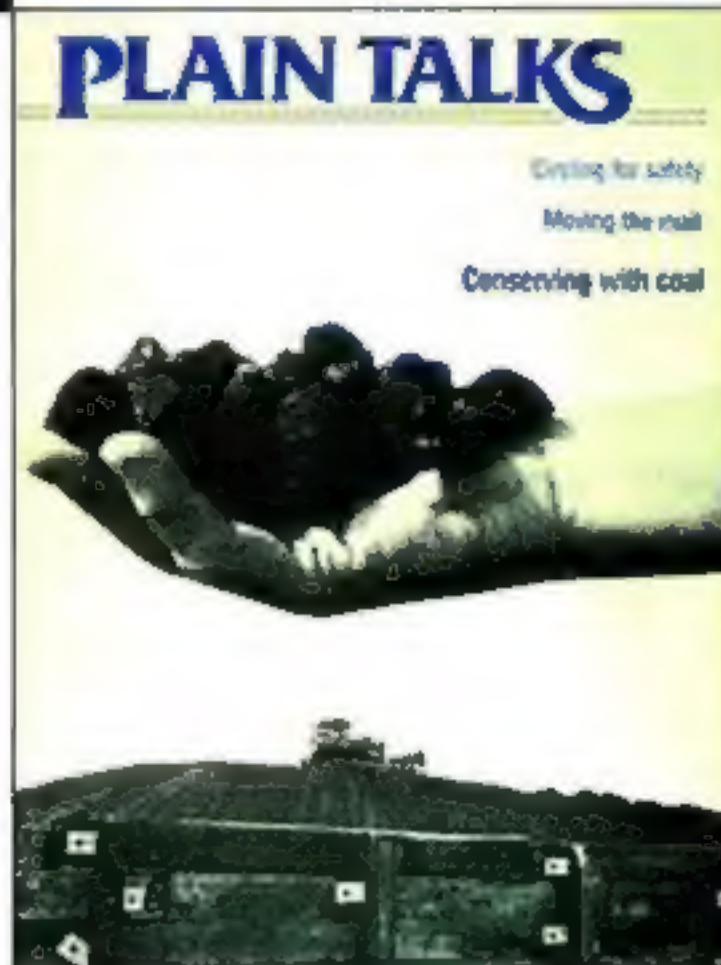
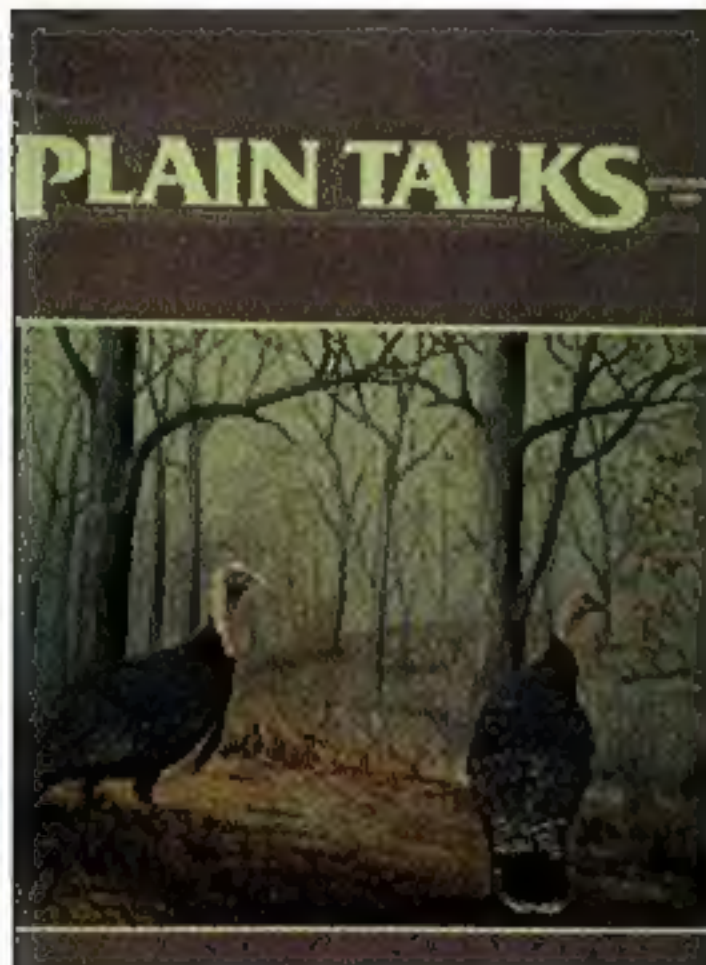
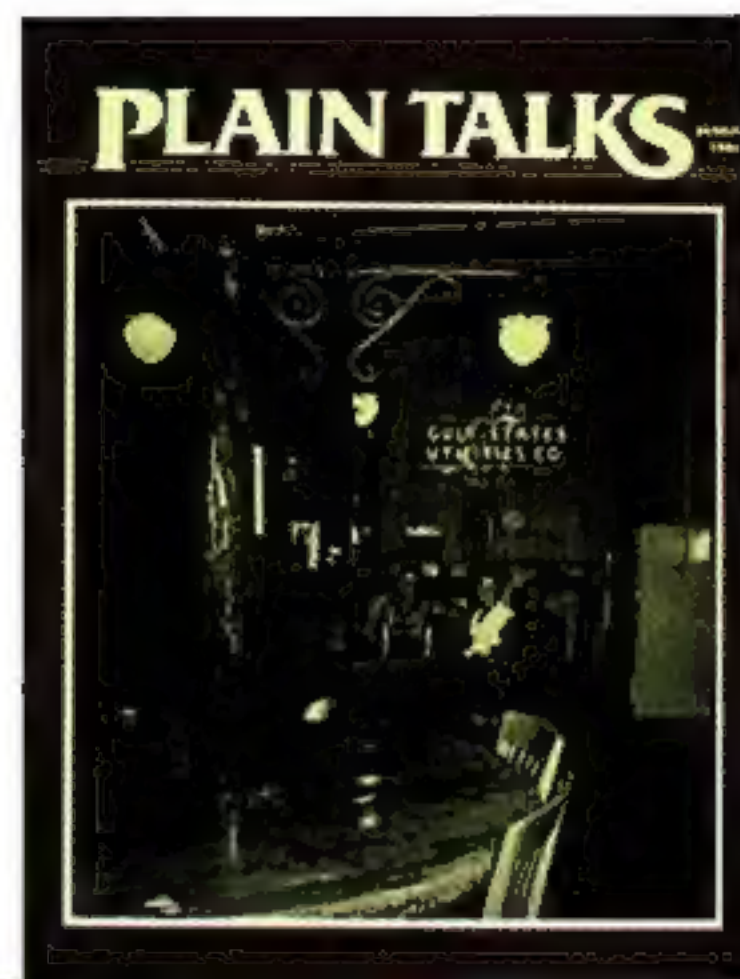
September 1986



July 1988



November 1987





'90s

by Scott Harper
Editor 1988-93

So far, the 1990s have produced monumental changes in the world at large and the world of GSU. The victory cry of "freedom" rang out across the lands of Germany, Russia and Kuwait, reverberating throughout all nations.

We all watched in amazement as reunited Germans sang and cheered, tearing down the Berlin Wall. We were astonished when allied Russians brought down the Lenin statue and stormed the streets of Moscow demanding democracy. A hush fell upon the Earth when Communism, the greatest enemy of the Western Hemisphere, was silenced in the Soviet Union.

For the first time since the Vietnam War, American forces were called into harm's way against another country. As Iraqi forces, under the direction of Saddam Hussein, occupied Kuwait, America's military gathered in Saudi Arabia and drew a line in the sands of the Middle East. Operation Desert Storm sent a message to the world: The American military might is still the greatest on earth.

The 1990s also have brought new leadership to the United States and GSU. Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton took the reins of the U.S. government as president, which gave our country's leadership to a new generation. At GSU, Joe Donnelly assumed the company's top position as Chief Executive.

For Gulf States, the early 1990s have been filled with happiness and sadness. After surviving a major financial battle in the late 1980s,

the company and its employees fought back and brought the organization from the door of bankruptcy.

In 1992, an unwelcome guest named Andrew came into the GSU service area. Hurricane Andrew left massive damage in Louisiana, but gave Gulf States employees the opportunity to show just how a company should respond in an emergency.

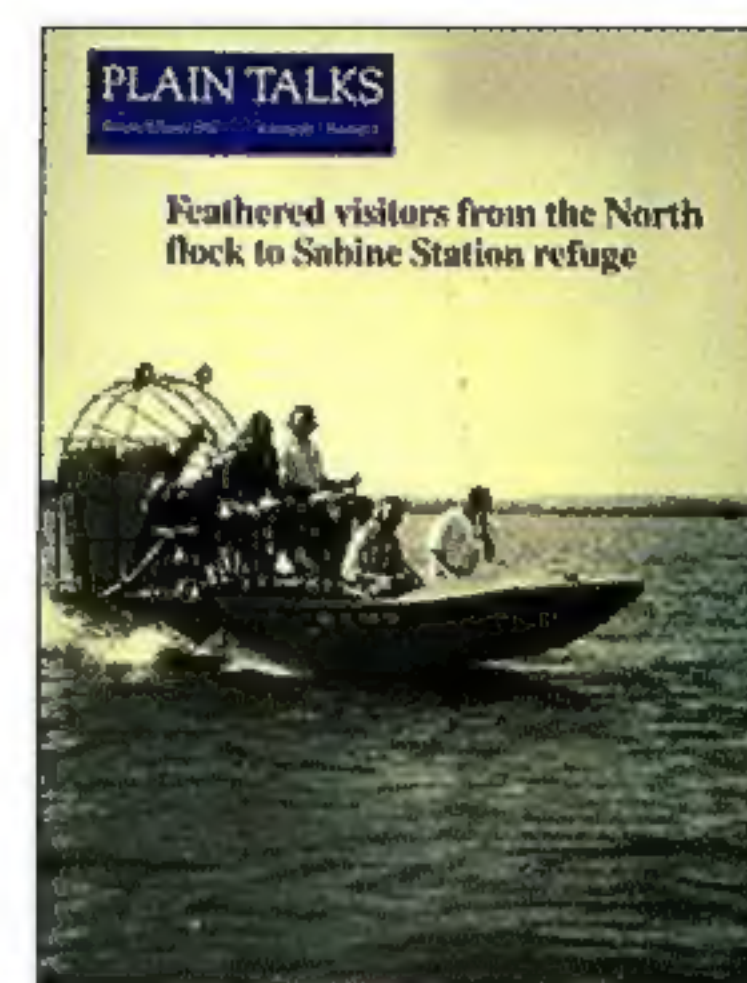
1993 brought tragedy. On Tuesday, Jan. 5, Glenda Broussard, Jeff Hollis, Allen "Butch" Daniel and Larry Sam were all severely burned in an explosion at Sabine Station. Seventeen days later, Broussard passed away and later in July, Daniel passed away. Their memory will be in the pages of **Plain Talks**, as well as the hearts of employees, forever. Hollis was released from the hospital in May and Sam, who was burned over more than 90 percent of his body, is an inspiration to all with his miraculous recovery.

Probably the event that will mark the 1990s the most for Gulf States is the announcement in June 1992 of the intent to merge with Entergy Corporation. Hundreds of employees worked countless hours on integration teams and linking teams to help ensure a successful and smooth merger between the two companies.

And so as one GSU era ends, a new one begins. But, when one looks back at 71 years of Gulf States Utilities' history, including companies prior to incorporation, one thing is constant: **Plain Talks**.



July 1993



January 1990



January 1991



November 1991



June 1991



September 1992



March 1993



January 1993

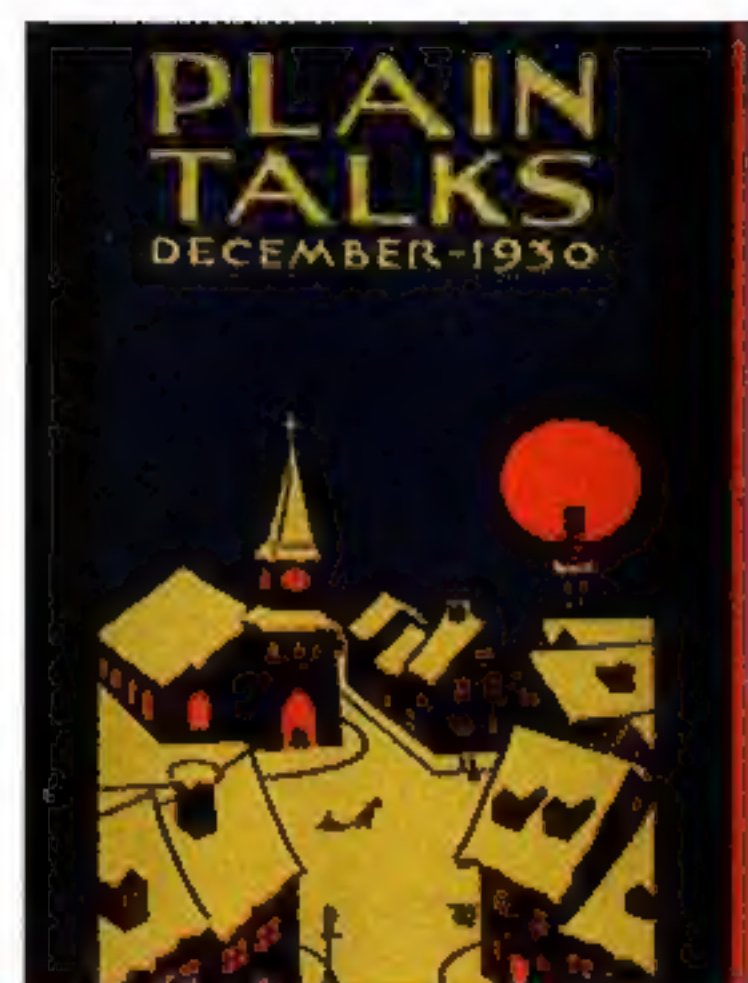


Christmas through the years

Throughout its 71-years, the annual Christmas issue of **Plain Talks** was always special. In December, editors would look for something a little extra to spruce up the magazine to add to the festive time of year. Even in the early days of **Just Plain Talks**, an extra color was added for the Christmas publication. Take a look back at **Plain Talks'** Christmas through the years.



December 1945



December 1930



December 1932



December 1949



December 1956



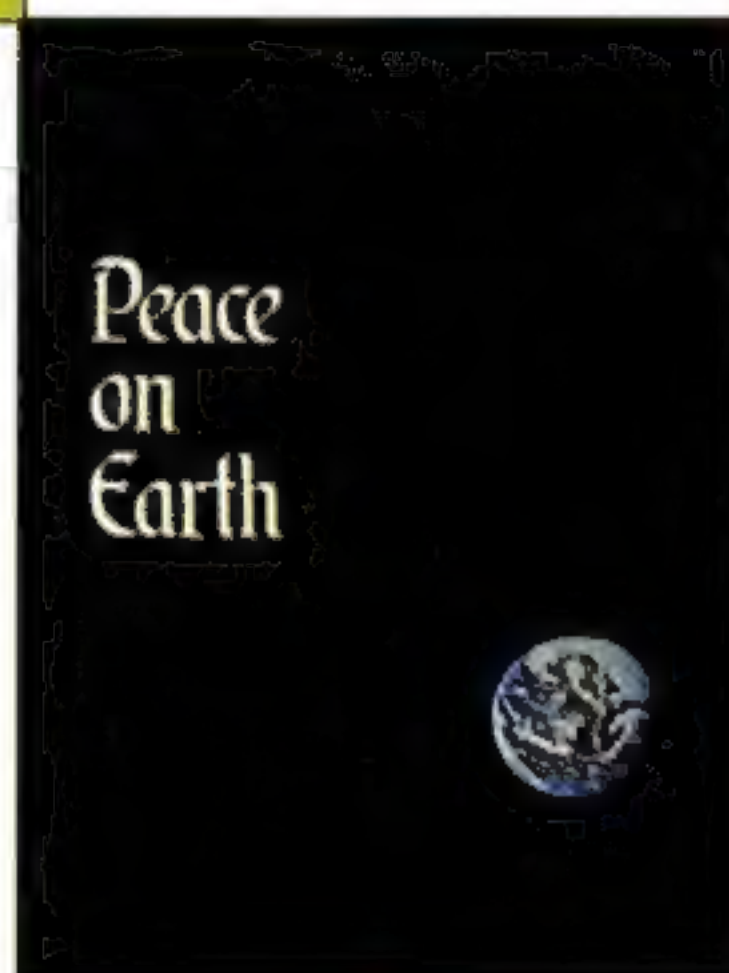
December 1959



December 1966



December 1968



December 1971



December 1987



December 1990



December 1993



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